SPORTS / A21

No other option for BAP but to adhere to Tokyo basketball accord

ENTERTAINMENT / D6

Dollywood: Yes, Bong Revilla has teenage son by another woman

WORLD / A20

Protesters out to topple gov't paralyze Lebanon, block main roads in capital Beirut

NEWS / A2

US-RP Balikatan to run from Feb. 18 to March 4

The long and short of Vigan 'longganiza'

CHOLESTEROL NA LANG ANG PROBLEMA!

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

VIGAN CITY—IF THE United States has hot dogs, the Philippines has "longganiza" (native sausages).

THE LONG/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, January 24, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 47 P18 website: inquirer.net

Pacquiao gets Comelec exemption for 20 guns

By Jerome Aning

GUNS ARE BETTER FOR DEFENSE THAN EVEN his fists.

Citing his multimillion-peso net worth and the need to protect himself and his family, boxing idol Manny Pacquiao filed 20 applications for exemption from the gun ban, and the Commission on Elections granted all of them.

PACQUIAO/ A13

24 RP seamen snatched

Abductors in Nigeria want to swap Pinoys for 2 prisoners

By Volt Contreras

NOT JUST SIX BUT 24 Filipino seafarers were seized on Saturday by a militant group operating in an oil-rich region in Nigeria, the Department of Foreign Affairs disclosed yesterday.

Of the 24 Filipinos, 17 were dragged to a village in Warri in Nigeria's Delta State, while the other seven were held aboard their German-owned cargo ship as hostages, according to Esteban Conejos Jr., foreign undersecretary for migrant workers' affairs.

The "all-Filipino" captives included the captain. Their predicament marked the first time their shipping company, Baco Liner, was attacked by Nigerian militants in its 30 years of plying the route, Conejos noted.

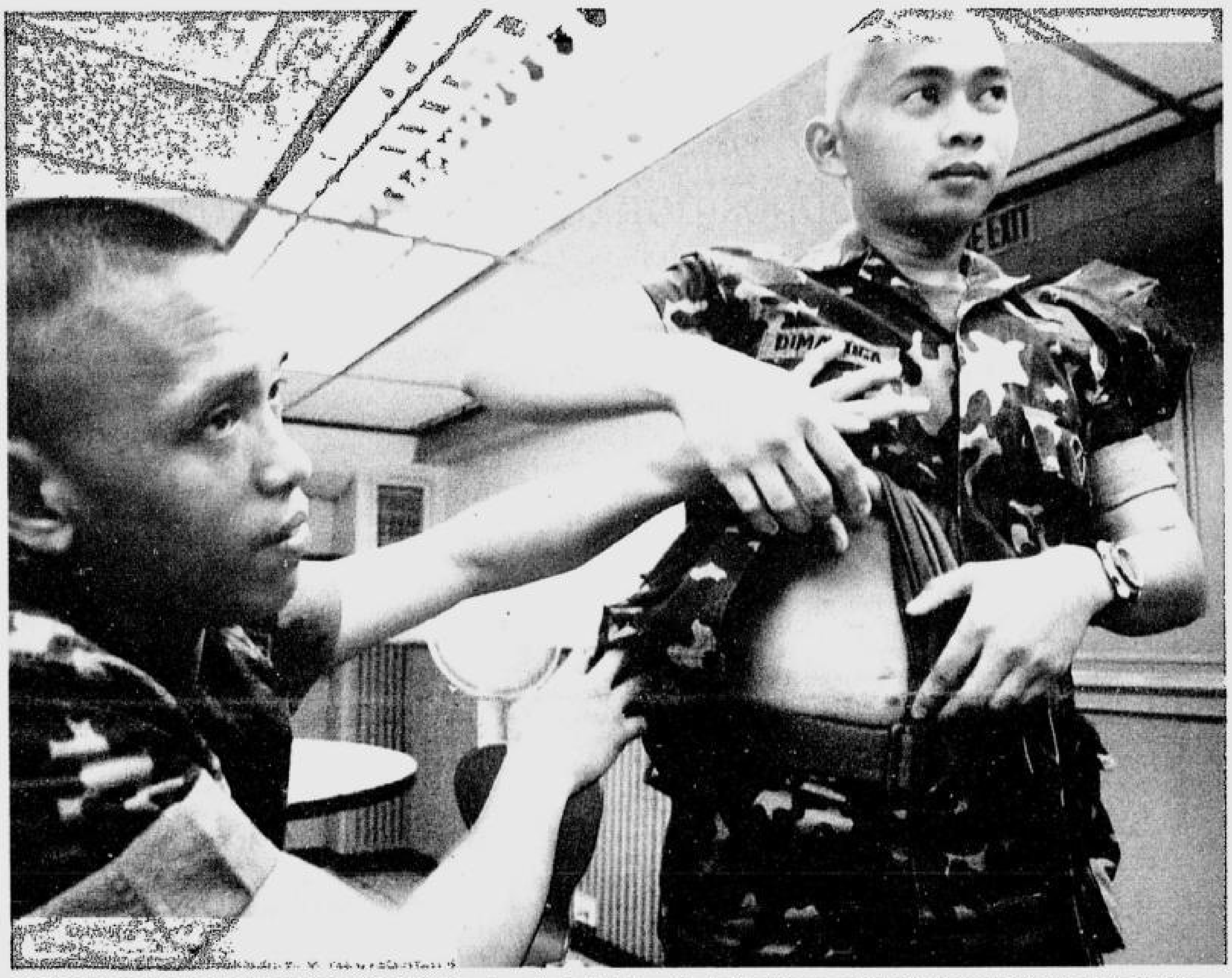
The incident, which the DFA said was the fifth time Filipino workers were kidnapped in the area since last year, prompted President Macapagal-Arroyo on Monday to suspend labor deployment to Nigeria.

Conejos declined to give other details, including the identity of the Filipinos, citing the "sensitivity" of ongoing negotiations.

The abductors, members of the so-called Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), have not asked for ransom and have kept their earlier "political demands," Conejos said in a briefing.

MEND has reportedly demanded the release of two prisoners charged with treason in exchange for the Filipinos' freedom.

24 RP SEAMEN/ A6



CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE HEROIC KIND: This is where the bullets from the Janjalani camp got 2nd Lt. Romulo Dimayuga Pfc. Jovelito Manalili shows broadcaster Mike Enriquez during his radio program on dzBB on Tuesday. Last Sept. 4, the Marine reconnaissance platoon was only five meters away from Janjalani and his men in Patikul, Sulu. Dimayuga as platoon leader decided to attack. Six of his men, like himself, on their first field assignments, were killed; 16 were wounded.
RAFFY LERMA

Battle was won by 27 Marines vs 200 Abus

By Dona Pazzibugan

THEY NUMBERED ONLY A LITTLE over two dozen, some of them were already dead and most of the rest were wounded. About 200 Abu Sayyaf bandits were closing in on them.

But the young Marines were united by one resolve: There would be no retreat, they would go down together.

"I looked to my side, one of my men was dead. On my other side, one was wounded. Behind me, someone had blood gushing from his face," 2nd Lt. Romulo Dimayuga said yesterday, recalling the battle in Sulu last Sept. 4 in which his men killed top Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani.

"But (our) will to fight was unmatchable. Even though wounded, we were firing back," the platoon leader of the 27-man elite Marine Force Reconnaissance Class 12 told reporters.

Despite the overwhelming force his platoon faced, Dimayuga said he and his men never considered retreating.

"We held the line. We could not retreat because we were going to leave many behind. I will not leave any Marines behind," he said.

"We agreed that whatever happened, if it was going to end here, we'd go down together."

BATTLE/ A4

EU assails unabated killing of activists

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE EUROPEAN UNION YESTERDAY assailed the unabated killing of political activists in the Philippines and called on the Arroyo administration to put a stop to the attacks that have claimed hundreds of lives.

German Ambassador Axel Weishaupt said all EU members "deplore" the killings and the human rights abuses being reported out of the Philippines.

"We really hope that measures are taken to bring it to an end. We all hope that it will stop one day because it's bad for the reputation of this country," Weishaupt said in response to a question in an open forum at the Mandarin Hotel in Makati City.

He also expressed hope that the Melo Commission formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the killings would "come to a satisfying conclusion."

Germany currently holds the six-month rotating presidency of the 27-member European bloc.

It was not the first time that the European Union had expressed dismay at the continued killings. In November last year, the EU representative in the Philippines said that whatever the number of the deadly attacks, what was significant was that these had not been prevented.

The human rights organization Karapatan says it had documented 820 killings of political activists since Ms Arroyo assumed power in 2001. [The INQUIRER count stands at about 260.] Of those killed, 123 were leaders and members of the leftist party-

EU ASSAILS/ A4

SC reverses Ombudsman, orders graft raps vs Disini

By Armand N. Nocum

OVERTURNING A DECISION OF former Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, the Supreme Court has ordered the Office of the Ombudsman to proceed with the filing of graft charges against Marcos crony Herminio Disini and several others.

In a 10-page decision, the high court granted the appeal of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) to reinstate the criminal complaint against Disini, his brother Jesus, and other officials of the Disini-owned Herdis Group of Companies, including board directors Angelo Manahan, Domingo Borja, Rodolfo Jacob and Jerry Orlina.

In the decision, penned by Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna, the tribunal reversed the May 2, 1997, decision of Desierto.

The Supreme Court said the Office of the Ombudsman committed grave abuse of discretion when it ordered the dismissal of the complaint filed by PCGG against Disini et al. "for lack of legal and factual basis."

The case stemmed from a March 11, 1982, complaint that alleged that Disini, a personal friend and golfing partner of Marcos', gave the latter shares of Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp. (VIMC) and The Energy Corp. (TEC) worth P40 million and P25

SC REVERSES/ A13

SC junks PCGG bid to sell P1.4-B San Miguel shares

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT HAS junked the petition of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) seeking approval of the agreement it had entered into with the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) for the sale of San Miguel Corp. shares worth P1.45 billion.

The deal involved sequestered San Miguel shares, which were believed to be part of the ill-gotten wealth of the late President Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies.

"We find no grave abuse of dis-

SC JUNKS/ A13

Church group opens Pinoy Voters' Academy

By Christian V. Esguerra

CHOOSING THE PEOPLE SHE wanted to run her country used to be no problem for this young female voter from Caloocan City.

Faced with an assortment of candidates at the polling booth, she would simply pick the most recognizable names. Good looks and a strong public presence made the job much easier, too.

This was in 1995 and the female voter, then in her 20s, was probably too young to care.

CHURCH/ A6

BBC int'l survey: 49% say US exerts negative role; 73% against Iraq war

LONDON—BATTERED IN THE polls at home, US President George W. Bush is also facing mounting disapproval of his policies abroad, according to a British Broadcasting Corp. survey published Tuesday.

The BBC World Service poll of 26,000 people in 25 countries, released on the day Bush gives his State of the Union speech to the US Congress, shows that only 29 percent now feel the United States exerts a mainly positive influence on the world. The figure was 36 percent a year ago and 40 percent two years ago.

Forty-nine percent now believe the United States plays a mainly negative role internationally.

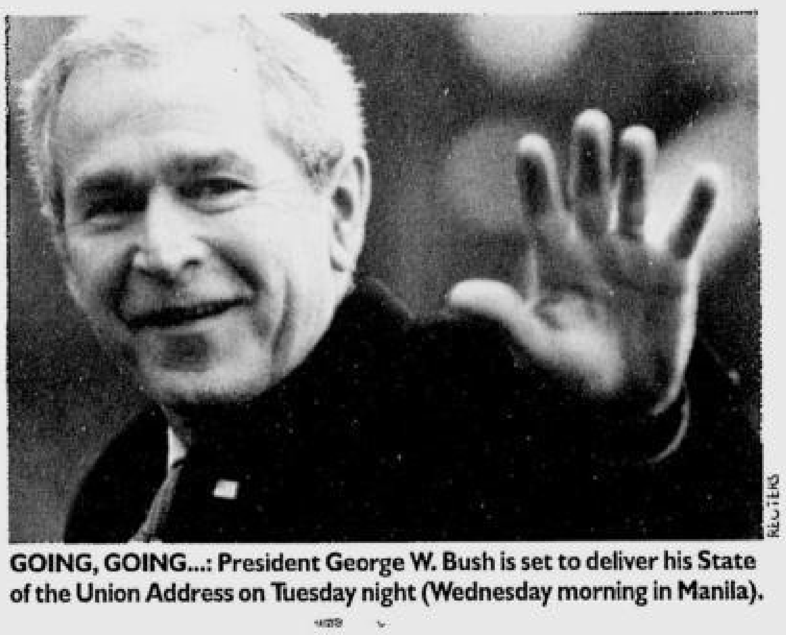
Even in America, the number who believe that overall the country is a force for good in the world has dropped to 57 percent from 63 percent a year ago and 71 percent two years ago.

As Bush prepares to send another 21,500 troops to Iraq, the survey shows that 73 percent of those polled in 25 countries find sharp disagreement with US policy on Iraq, which is ravaged by violence nearly four years after the US-led invasion.

This was the first time the annual poll had posed a question on the conduct of the Iraq war, and other specific policy areas, including the US stand on global warming and Iran's nuclear program. In all these areas, the survey respondents registered strong disapproval of the US position.

Pollsters from the GlobeScan

BBC INT'L/ A6


REUTERS

GOING, GOING...: President George W. Bush is set to deliver his State of the Union Address on Tuesday night (Wednesday morning in Manila).

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/23/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FrontPage

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Balikatan back on track

By Volt Contreras

THE CANCELED MILITARY EXERCISES BEtween the Philippines and the United States are back on track, indicating that bilateral ties between the two countries had normalized after Manila gave up custody of a US Marine convicted last month of raping a Filipino woman.

The US Embassy yesterday said Balikatan 2007 would "go forward," with the war games to be held between Feb. 18 and March 4 in different parts of the country.

Its humanitarian component—medical, dental, veterinary and engineering projects—will be focused on Jolo, Sulu, one of the strongholds of the homegrown Abu Sayyaf terror group which is on the Washington list of terrorist organizations.

"The exercise reflects the robust and active Philippines-US military partnership for the benefit of our peoples," the embassy said in a statement.

The US last December canceled this year's "Balikatan" (Filipino for "shoulder-to-shoulder") military training exercises apparently to pressure the Philippine government into returning Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith to US custody while his rape conviction was under appeal.

The 21-year-old Smith was found guilty by a Makati court of raping a Filipino woman known only as "Nicole" and sentenced him to 40 years in prison.

Judge Benjamin Pozon ordered Smith held at the Makati City jail pending an agreement between the two governments on where he would be detained.

The US insisted that he remain in its custody, according to its interpretation of the 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement that governs the annual joint military exercise and provides some legal protection for US servicemen charged with breaking Philippine laws.

The rape victim's camp opposed Smith's transfer in the Court of Appeals.

Malacañang, however, acting without a court order, had Smith transferred from the Makati jail back to the US Embassy compound close to midnight on Dec. 29.

With Smith back in its custody, the US Embassy announced that the Balikatan exercises were back on track.

In its statement, the embassy said Balikatan 2007 will "focus primarily on humanitarian projects in Mindanao, especially Jolo island."

The embassy also said US Navy ships will visit, adding: "There will separately be a combined task force staff exercise to help improve Philippine and US civil-military personnel's ability to work together to provide assistance in crisis and noncrisis circumstances."

The annual war games usually brings 3,000-5,000 US troops to the Philippines. But they were canceled last year amid the custody dispute involving the US Marine convicted of raping the Filipino woman.

The annual training has proved crucial to the Philippines, which announced it had killed Khadaffy Janjalani, the chieftain of the Abu Sayyaf, in a clash in Jolo in September. DNA tests conducted in the US confirmed the death on Saturday.

Days earlier, US-trained Philippine Army forces killed Abu Sulaiman, who was seen as a possible successor to Janjalani.

Janjalani and Abu Sulaiman were accused of plotting the kidnapping of American and Filipino tourists from a Palawan resort in 2001, after which two of the Americans were killed, as well as a 2004 ferry blast that killed 116 people near Manila. *With AP, AFP reports*

Not all pols lie – Ermita

NOT ALL POLITICIANS ARE DISHONest although there might be those who would lie through their teeth just to get a coveted post, according to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

"We cannot say that all politicians are dishonest. There might be some who are like that. I just hope that politicians are aware of this so that they can be truthful to the promises they make," Ermita said in an interview with dzXL radio.

Ermita, a former military general who served as a two-term congressman after a stint as defense secretary, was reacting to a survey conducted by the Asia Research Organization for Gallup International Association last November which showed that three of every five Filipinos believe their political leaders to be dishonest.

Roughly half of the 1,000 respondents said politicians "behaved unethically" and were "too sensitive to public opinion."

Ermita said it could be that some members of the public may be disappointed by the failure of political leaders to deliver on the promises they made during election campaigns.

"I guess those who experienced it think that all politicians are dishonest. But we cannot say all. I don't believe Filipinos are dishonest," he said.

The survey noted that the negative reputation of politicians was not unique to the Philippines. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

UNO united no more

Tatad quits opposition over dynasty 'madness'

By Norman Bordadora

FORMER SENATOR FRANCISCO TATAD quit the United Opposition (UNO) yesterday, denouncing his former colleagues for "error and madness" in turning the legislative race into family affairs.

Tatad was upset over the group's decision to draft some senatorial candidates who have family members who are incumbent senators, among them the son of the opposition's avowed leader deposed President Joseph Estrada.

In a letter dated Jan. 15 to the former President detained at his estate in Tanay, Rizal, Tatad said he "felt insulted" when he heard news that UNO had already drafted Estrada's son San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito, Senator Pia Cayetano's brother Alan Peter and Senator Aquilino Pimentel's son, Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III as senatorial candidates despite Tatad's yet-to-be-addressed reservations.

"The obvious assumption is that the voters are so pissed off with (President Macapagal-Arroyo) that they will eat any kind of dung we give them. This is false," wrote Tatad.

"(Should) error and madness prevail, three families would be holding six Senate seats or one-fourth of the Senate after May 2007," he added.

The 67-year-old Tatad reminded Estrada that in a meeting of opposition leaders during the ex-President's New Year's Day furlough in Greenhills, he raised the issue of "dynastyism."

"In that meeting, I waited to hear someone say I was wrong. But there was no effort to shoot down or refute my objection," Tatad told Estrada in his letter.

"You will therefore understand why, when you and (former senator Ernesto) Maceda agreed to release to the media the names of the three wonders as part of your proposed ticket while my objection was waiting to be addressed, I felt that my long service to the Opposition and my presence in that meeting had just been annulled," he added.

Tatad said he no longer sees a need for him to stay in UNO.

"That was the worst slap I have ever received—and from my party colleagues yet, he said.

Among those in the Jan. 1 meeting, according to Tatad's letter, were UNO president Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, Sen. Alfredo Lim, Minority Floor Leader Francis Escudero, former senators Vicente Sotto III, Maceda, former Agrarian Reform Sec. Horacio Morales and Caloocan Rep. Luis Asistio.

"I would have been proud to campaign for these young men if this one impediment did not exist or if their next of kin gave up their Senate seats right now," Tatad said.

"I would rather encourage JV Ejercito to go for a third term as mayor of San Juan, Koko Pimentel to try his luck a second time in Cagayan de Oro where he lost his mayoral bid when his father was Senate President; and Alan Peter to do something exciting in Taguig in the meantime," he added.

Tatad said that when Jinggoy ran for the Senate in 2004 while his mother former First Lady and now Sen. Luisa Estrada was just entering the latter half of her six-year term, he managed to defend the Estrada son's being drafted as part of the deposed President's need to validate his acceptance among Filipinos.

"Political dynasties are either appreciated or hated, tolerated or feared. But even in the worst of cases, dynastic family members try simultaneously to occupy as many different offices as possible, or else they alternate or rotate in holding on to a particular office that allows them to exercise power," Tatad said.

"This is precisely what the three young men's senatorial bid threatens to alter," he added.

In his letter, Tatad reminded him: "(You) came over to say you would like to have me included in your senatorial slate. I begged off.

Hecklers thought GMA delayed Il Divo concert, organizers say

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo did not cause the delayed start of last Saturday's concert by the Italian group Il Divo (not El Divo as earlier reported), said to be the reason Ms Arroyo was heckled by some concert-goers.

Concertus Inc., the producers of the concert, said they were forced to delay the show by 30 minutes to accommodate people who continued to arrive after the scheduled show time.

According to a statement issued by Concertus and released by Malacañang: "A small number of concert-goers mistakenly thought that the delay was caused by the arrival of President Arroyo... The concert's producers... acknowledges that an overestimation of Saturday traffic prodded them to allot a 30-minute allowance... Concertus Inc. apologizes to the President and the other guests."

Ms Arroyo was heckled by a group in the mostly A-list crowd when she was about to leave the concert at the Philippine International Convention Center last Jan. 20.

A witness to the incident told the INQUIRER that the heckling came from a group sitting in the upper boxes of the auditorium who may not have liked the President's late arrival.

According to the witness, boos were heard after organizers asked the crowd to remain in their seats as the President was leaving the PICC.

Organizers said the concert went very well, saying that "the audience's misconception as to the cause of the delayed start of the concert failed to dampen the enthusiastic atmosphere of the evening."

Incumbents seek coalition with Erap bloc

By TJ Burgonio
and Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr.

SCRAMBLING TO FORM A "UNITY TICKET," Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. and the members of the so-called "Third Force" said they were open to a coalition with the Estrada-led United Opposition in the May 14 elections.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Sen. Panfilo Lacson yesterday squelched speculations that reelectionist incumbent senators were forming another slate separate from UNO's ticket.

Pangilinan said his party, the Liberal Party, and Villar's Nacionalista Party were also holding talks with UNO, Aksyon Demokratiko and other parties to form a "unity ticket" of 12 candidates.

"We are discussing with representatives from UNO. We're looking at the possibility ... to come up with a common unity ticket," he told reporters.

If the talks prosper, the reelectionist senators will merge with the candidates drafted by UNO, which is headed by former President Joseph Estrada. On their own, the senators could not complete a 12-man slate, Pangilinan said.

"We are looking at the broadest coalition of individuals, parties, groups that will be committed to ensuring that the Senate will be an independent and vigilant institution," he said.

Thus, he said, calling their group the "Third Force" was a misnomer.

"Our group is not dissociating itself from the UNO. There are minor adjustments that can be agreed on. There's an ad hoc committee that is finalizing the list," Lacson told reporters. "It's going to be part of the main opposition slate."

Villar, Pangilinan, Lacson and fellow reelectionist Senators Ralph Recto and Edgardo Angara had agreed to form a "common ticket" among themselves, and if possible, take in former senators.

Angara and Recto had earlier indicated this was independent of the opposition and administration, setting off speculations that a "Third Force" was shaping up.

Angara said the "Third Force" line-up would be drafted based on platform rather than personality.

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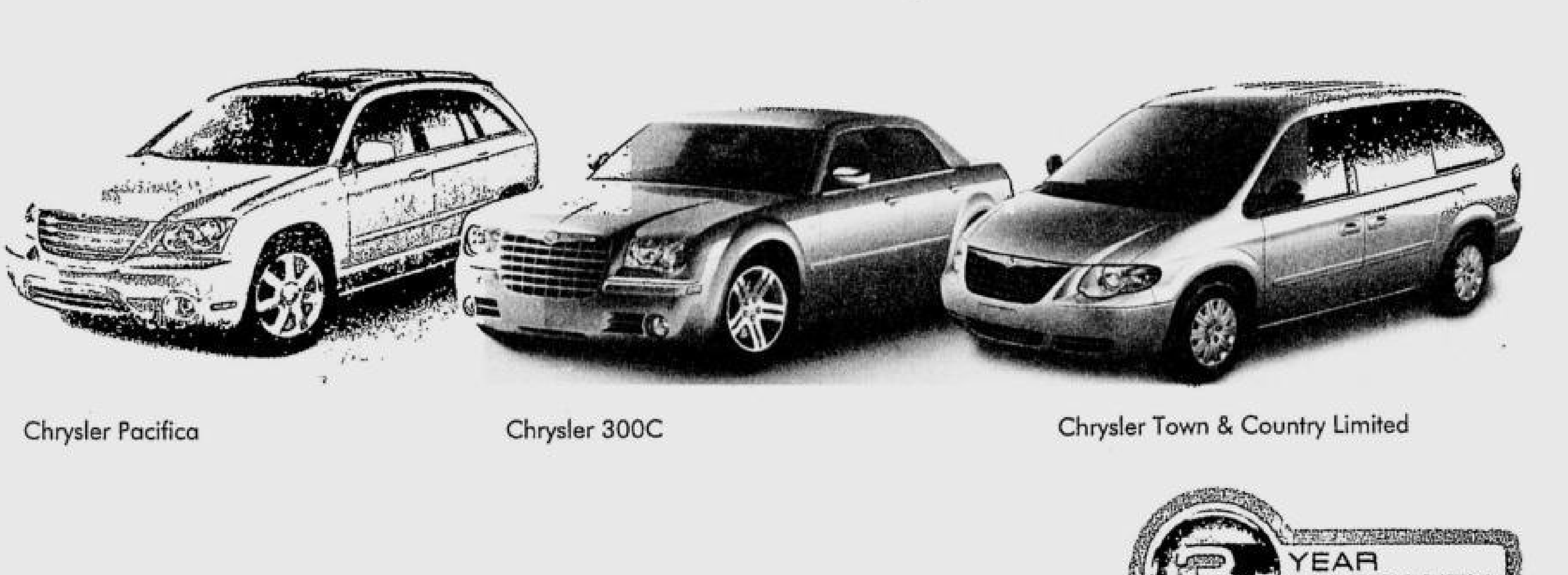

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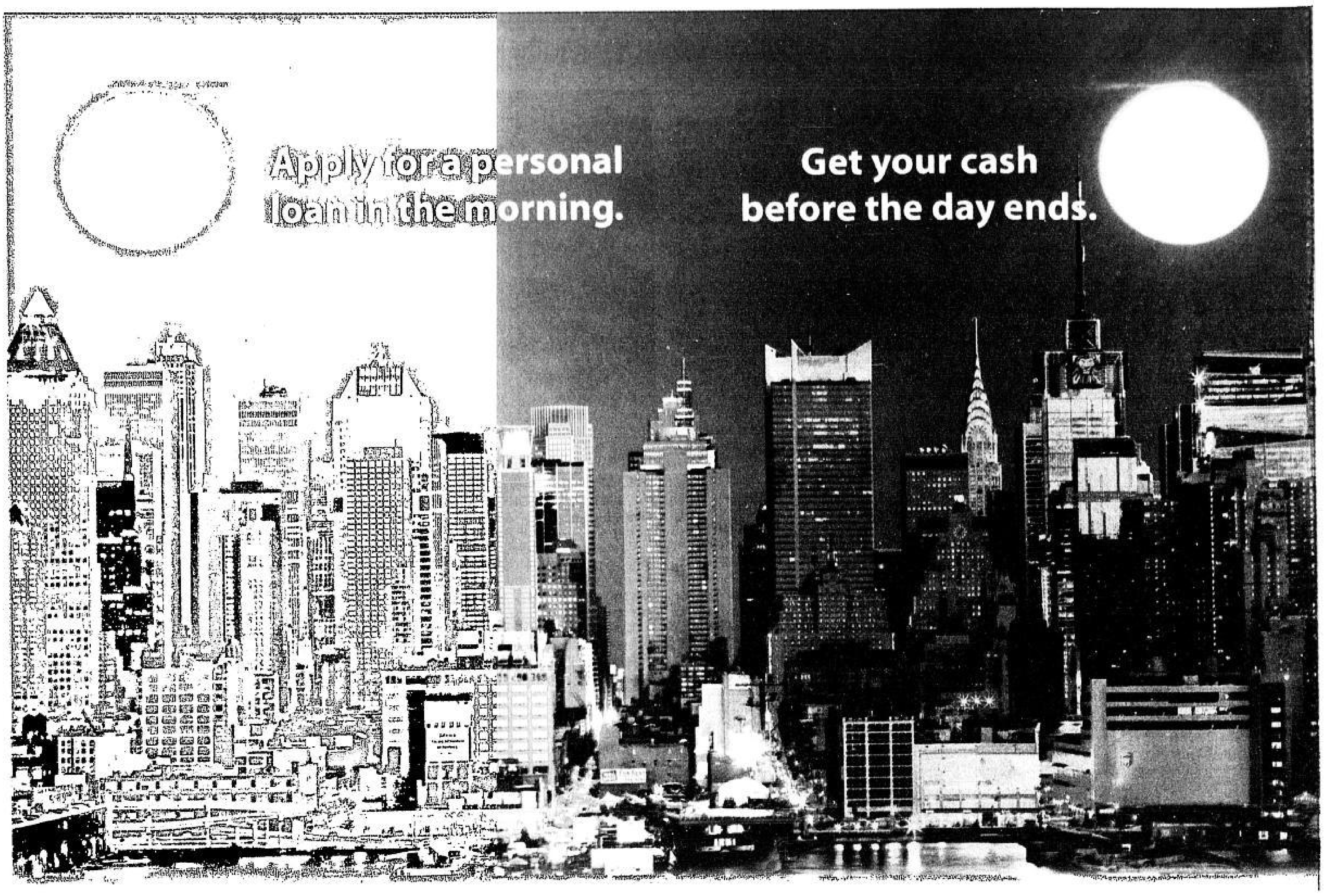
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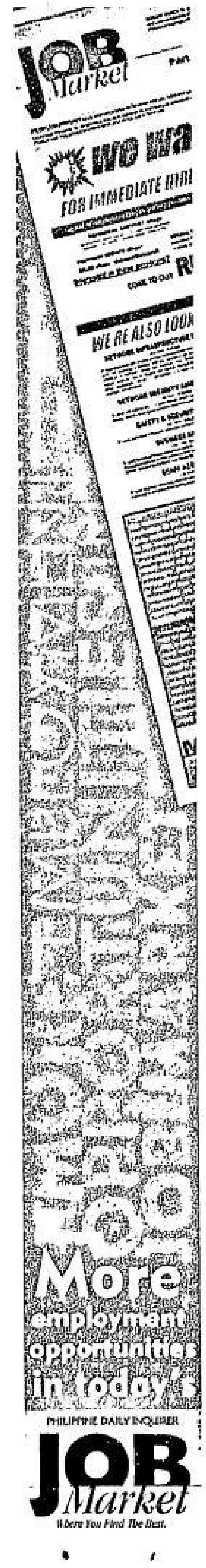

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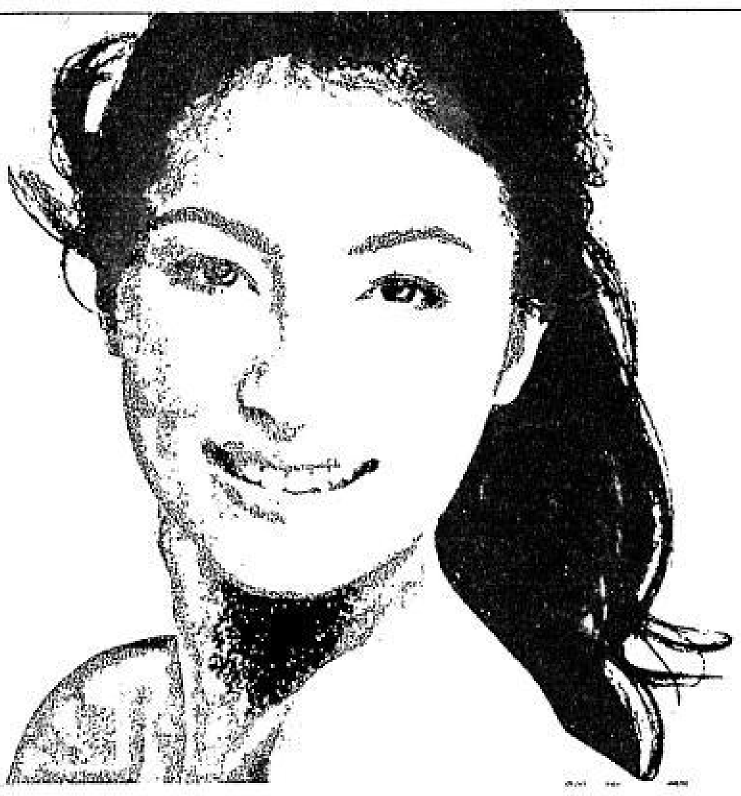

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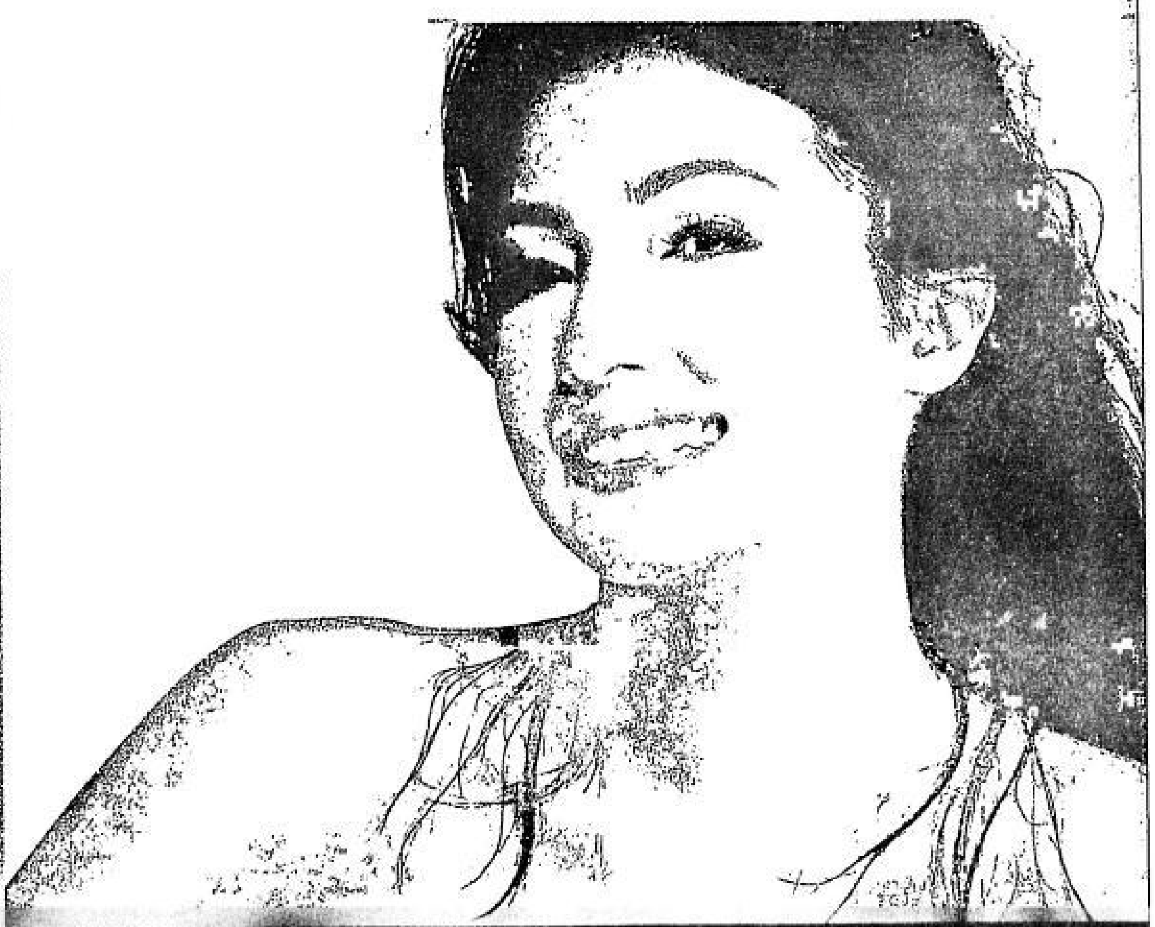

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Battle was won by 27 Marines …

From page A1

The 24-year-old Dimayuga stared ahead unblinking as he spoke.

Pfc. Jovelito Manalili, 26, who served as navigator, said his unit was very close-knit, its members having known each other for some time before they started a nine-month rigorous training.

Heavy price

Six of Dimayuga's men died in the pre-dawn clash in Patikul, Sulu. But the Abu Sayyaf paid dearly for testing the Marines' mettle.

A post-battle military report said 67 Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed in that encounter, including Janjalani.

It was the first time that Class 12 had suffered casualties since it was deployed to Sulu last Aug. 1, fresh from graduation.

Dimayuga said it was a "great honor" for the platoon to have killed Janjalani but he expressed sadness at the death of his six fellow Marines.

"Their deaths were not in vain because it had a very positive outcome, we got the leader of the Abu Sayyaf," he simply said.

Those who were killed were Cpl. Ryan Socrates, team leader; Cpl. Judy Gatan, team leader; Pfc. Isagani Zamora, gunner; Jayson Paiton, point man; Harold Almodovar, radio man, and Gilbert Parcia, assistant team leader.

Sixteen members of the platoon were wounded, including Dimayuga and Manalili.

One soldier is still in the hospital requiring major surgery for a splintered bone in the arm.

The death of Janjalani, whose bandit group had been linked by the United States to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, was confirmed only last week following DNA tests conducted by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The tests matched samples taken from the remains dug up in Barangay Kabuntakas in Patikul, some 2 km from the battle site, with saliva samples taken from Janjalani's brother Hector, who is serving a life term for kidnapping.

Dimayuga, who graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in 2005, said his unit tracked down Janjalani's camp based on intelligence information provided to the 3rd Marine Brigade under Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban.

Threat remains

Dimayuga showed no interest in the idea of a movie being made out of his platoon's feat.

"I will let higher-ups decide on that," he said.

Amid military claims that the killing of Janjalani could signal the end of the bandit group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front yesterday said Janjalani's death was not a guarantee that there would be peace in the south.

"It appears that Janjalani still has supporters at large. So, the problem with them remains," MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu told the INQUIRER.

But Kabalu conceded that Janjalani's death was a setback for the Abu Sayyaf and could deter those intending to join the group.

Kabalu also said the MILF central committee had agreed to help in the crackdown on the Abu Sayyaf and that MILF chair Ebrahim Murad had directed his men to deny the group sanctuary.

US role

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo said the military's success against the Abu Sayyaf was "in part due to the fact that (its) lair is becoming smaller because our grasp on peace in Mindanao and Southern Philippines has become wider."

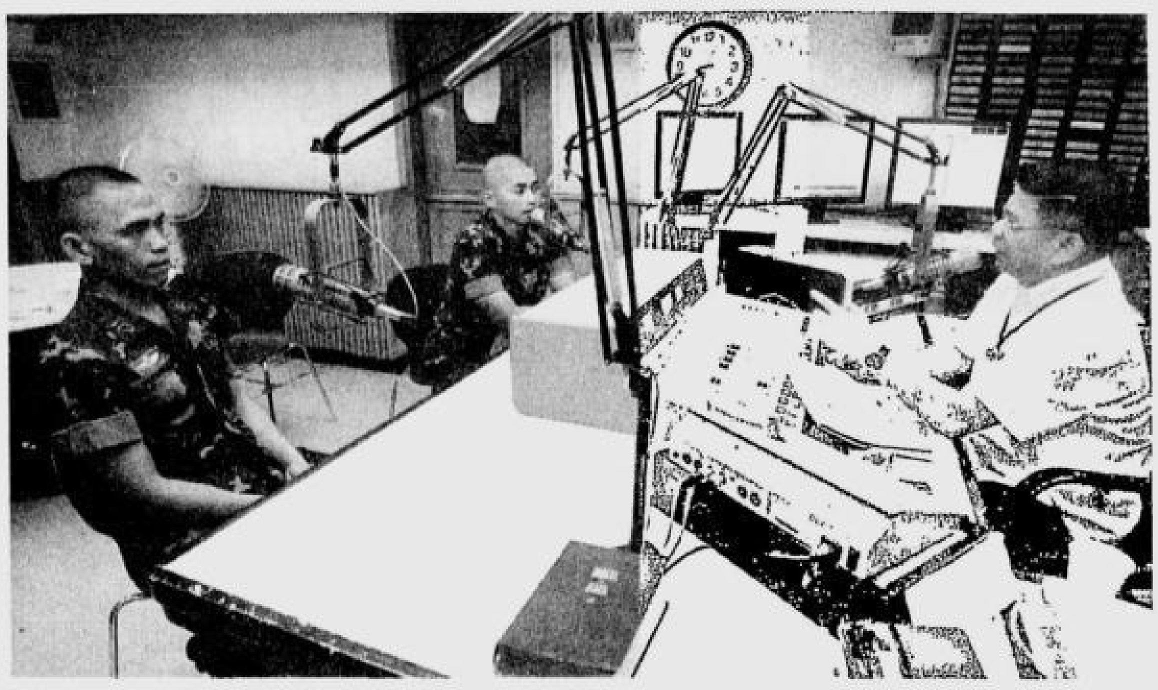
She also said the victories against the bandit group showed the success of the training and intelligence programs that the Philippines had received from the United States.

But some analysts said that remnants and "sleeper cells" of the Abu Sayyaf still posed a major threat.

Ricardo Blancaflor, a senior official with the government's Anti-Terrorism Task Force, cautioned against complacency, saying surviving Abu Sayyaf members could regroup under a different command.

"We cannot discount sleeper cells," Blancaflor said.

John Harrison, head of terrorism research at Singapore's S. Rajanatram School of International Studies, warned: "Even if no one takes over, it will fragment again and you will have bandits and perhaps more hardline terrorist cells." *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Edwin O. Fernandez, Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao, and AFP*



THE BATTLE that killed the most wanted man in Southeast Asia is recounted by Marine Recon platoon chief 2nd Lt. Romulo Dimayuga (center) and team leader Pfc. Jovelito Manalili to radio-TV personality Mike Enriquez. RAFFY LERMA

Malaysia on lookout for fleeing Abu Sayyaf members

KUALA LUMPUR—THE Malaysian military is on the lookout for members of the Abu Sayyaf who might slip into Malaysia after the death of its chieftain, Khadaffy Janjalani.

"There is possibly going to be a spillover of the Abu Sayyaf group but it should not happen," The Star newspaper yesterday quoted an Army field commander, Lt. Gen. Masood Zainal Abidin, as saying.

"We are well aware of what's happening on the other side," he said. "There will be a new (Abu Sayyaf) leader. It's just like a plant, which will see its plant growing when broken."

The general also said: "We're taking care of the situation. Everything is under control."

The Abu Sayyaf is holed up on islands in the southern Philippines near the coastline of part of Malaysia on Borneo island.

Up to half a million Filipinos live in Malaysia, many of them families of refugees who fled the Moro separatist rebellion in Mindanao in the 1970s.

Manila has estimated that up to 200,000 Filipinos are living illegally in Malaysia, mostly in Sabah.

Reports from AFP and AP

EU assails unabated …

From page A1

list group Bayan Muna.

The most recent Bayan Muna member to be killed, Prof. Jose Maria Cui, was shot dead on Jan. 19 in front of his class at the University of Eastern Philippines in Catarman, Northern Samar.

Soiled reputation

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, a House deputy minority leader, lauded the EU's renewed call after learning of it from a Deutsche Presse-Agentur report.

He said Ambassador Weishaupt's statement confirmed Ms Arroyo's "soiled international reputation as a human rights violator and as a President who cannot stop the slaughter of civilians and noncombatants" through an "all-out war" against communist insurgents that purportedly also targeted legitimate people's organizations.

"The killing of activists continues under Ms Arroyo, while the regime expands the questionable dismissal proceedings against local government officials identified with the political opposition," Ocampo said.

He said that in Philippine traditional politics, "violence and terror" were usually the precursors of massive electoral fraud.

"All told, Ms Arroyo is leading the massacre of human rights, due process and formal democracy in preparation for wholesale cheating in the May elections as she targets full control of Congress," Ocampo said.

He warned the German ambassador and the European Union not to place full trust in the Melo Commission, saying its existence had not deterred death squads.

SPEAKING UP on the killings and human rights abuses during an open forum at the Mandarin hotel, German Ambassador to the Philippines Axel Weishaupt hopes the Melo Commission will come to a "satisfying conclusion." Germany now holds the rotating presidency of the 27-member European Union. INQUIRER PHOTO

Quality affordable medicines now!

Pass S. B. 2263 and H. B. 6035

With only three short weeks left before the Third Regular Session of the 13th Congress adjourns on February 10 for the May 14, 2007 elections, a strong bipartisan resolve is needed to enact into law S. B. 2263 and H. B. 6035*, the legislative proposals that will bring the prices of quality medicines down.

We urge our lawmakers to summon that resolve, and join the people in a common cause to make public health—of which access to affordable medicines is key—a part of the scorecard to rate our lawmakers' performance in the past three years.

Public health as common national agenda

When **Senator Mar Roxas** filed S. B. 2263 in the Senate and **Rep. Junie Cua** filed House Bill No. 6035 in the House of Representatives, they not only took the first, bold step toward prescribing a cure to the plague of high medicine prices. They also showed that the people and our leaders could commit to a national agenda, and that public health is good, healthy politics.

Sixteen senators have crossed party lines to support S. B. 2263. Aside from Roxas and co-author **Sen. Pia "Compañera" Cayetano, Senators Richard Gordon, Ramon Revilla, Jr., Sergio Osmeña III, Edgardo Angara, Ralph Recto, Panfilo Lacson, M. A. Madrigal, Manuel Lapid, Rodolfo Biazon, Alfredo Lim, Luisa Ejercito-Estrada, Juan Flavier, Francis Pangilinan,** and **Aquilino Pimentel** have signed the committee report on this bill. **Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago** and **Edgardo J. Angara** have also contributed their legal expertise to refine the measure.

In the House, 22 members** have likewise shed party affiliation and signed the committee report on H. B. 6035.

H. E. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has certified as urgent the two proposals, in support of the Philippine Medium Term Development Plan goal of reducing by half the prices of medicine by 2010. In fact, in her speech before the first League of Cities of the Philippines convention on January 18, the President urged city mayors to nominate areas where the Department of Health can set up shops for half-priced medicines.

Affordable medicines a Constitutional right

Enacting into law the Roxas and Cua proposals NOW will provide our people easy access to affordable quality medicines through greater market competition, greater support for Filipino generic drug companies, and rationalized and strengthened government-use provisions in our Intellectual Property laws. The proposals conform to the TRIPS flexibilities recognized by the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organization.

Indeed, during the numerous hearings at the Senate and at the House on the proposals, various relevant government agencies and private sector individuals and institutions expressed support to these landmark legislative pieces.

Civil society group "Ayos na Gamot sa Abot Kayang Presyo" or AGAP calls for immediate legislative action on S. B. 2263 and H. B. 6035. A multi-sectoral coalition organized by the Fair Trade Alliance, AGAP is composed of individuals and public and private groups working for the common national goal of lowering the prices of—and broadening the Filipino people's access to—medicines.

We could no longer ignore our people's health. As Senator Roxas said: **"We have to join the common cause to lower the prices of medicines and make them accessible to all if we are to abide by the Constitutional mandate to make protection of public health of primordial importance."**

* Reps. Ana Theresia "Risa" Hontiveros-Baraquel; Arthur "Dodo" Y. Pingoy, Jr., M. D.; Roseller L. Barinaga; Eufrocino M. Codilla, Sr.; Lorenzo R. Tañada III; Loretta Ann "Etta" P. Rosales; Mario "Mayong" Jojo Aguja; Rafael P. Nantes; Amadeo T. Espino, Jr.; Rodante D. Marcoleta; Darlene R. Antonino-Custodio; Ma. Milagros "Mitos" H. Magsaysay, and Reylina "Nenong" G. Nicolas, co-authors

** Reps. Edcel C. Lagman & Rodolfo C. Bacani, committee vice chairpersons; Felix R. Alfelor, Jr.; Rey B. Aquino, M.D.; Ferjenel G. Biron, M.D.; Danton Q. Bueser; Teodoro A. Casino; Del R. De Guzman; Janette L. Garin, M.D.; Rollo S. Golez; Eduardo R. Gullas; Gregorio T. Ipong; Hermilando I. Mandanas; Roger G. Mercado; Abraham Kahlil B. Mitra; Pedro M. Pancho; Prospero A. Pichay, Jr.; Rizalina L. Seachon-Lanete; Mary Ann L. Susano; Acmad M. Tomawis; Luis R. Villafuerte; & Renato "Ka Rene" B. Magtubo

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No. 56 Mother Igancia Avenue cor. Dr. Lazcano St., Quezon City
Telephones: 372-4991 loc. 30 Facsimile: 372-3924 E-mail: fta@fairtradealliance.org

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GCC accepts JBC verdict, clarifies cases

AFTER FAILING TO MAKE IT TO THE short list of candidates for the Supreme Court vacancy, Government Corporate Counsel Agnes Devanadera yesterday said she accepts the verdict of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC). She, however, clarified that pending court cases filed against her—which were the main reason she was cut from the final list—were "plain hazards" that are part of the job and a risk that any government officer has to accept.

Devanadera was among the candidates for associate justice interviewed by the JBC, which is tasked to screen the nominees to vacancies in the judiciary.

The other candidates interviewed were Court of Appeals Presiding Justice Ruben T. Reyes, appeals court associate justices Edgardo P. Cruz, Roberto Barrios and Portia Alino-Hormachuelos, Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo Nachura and Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo de Castro.

Devanadera was an early favorite and reportedly had the full backing of Malacañang but her candidacy suffered a setback when JBC member and former Sandiganbayan Justice Raoul Victorino raised an objection, citing complaints against her pending in the courts.

"As long as due process is respected, it is possible to set aside these issues as mere hindrances and at the end of the day still achieve a higher moral ground," Devanadera said.

The GCC was a former mayor of Sampaloc, Quezon, and president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines. She also thanked all those who openly supported her. She added that "truth is on my side and that's what really matters in the end."

OFWs in Dubai melee out on bail

SIX FILIPINO WORKERS WHO WERE JAILED following a melee on Saturday with Egyptians in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, were freed yesterday, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration said.

"They don't have to remain long in jail, the case against them is only for minor offenses," Owwa administrator Marianito Roque told reporters. The employer of the Filipinos, Arabian Aluminum Co., agreed to bail out the detained workers.

Virginia Calvez, labor attache to Dubai, said she, consul general Antonio Curameng and other officials of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office met with the OFWs involved in the fracas to resolve the issue of their security and safety upon returning to the barracks and when they report back to work.

The company also committed to transfer the OFWs to a new camp that will separate them from the Egyptians and provide 24-hour security to prevent the incident from recurring, Calvez said in her report to Labor Secretary Arturo Brion.

Last Jan. 21, 106 OFWs fled to the Philippine consulate-general a day after they clashed with Egyptian workers.

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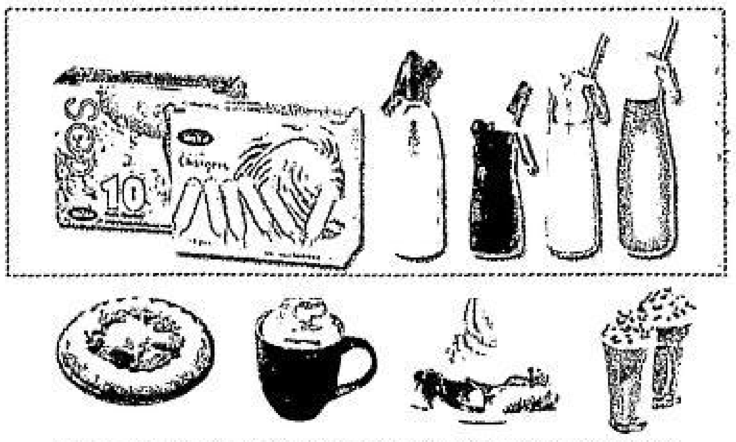

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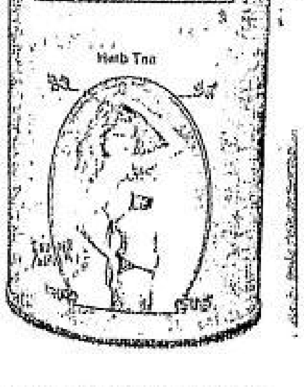

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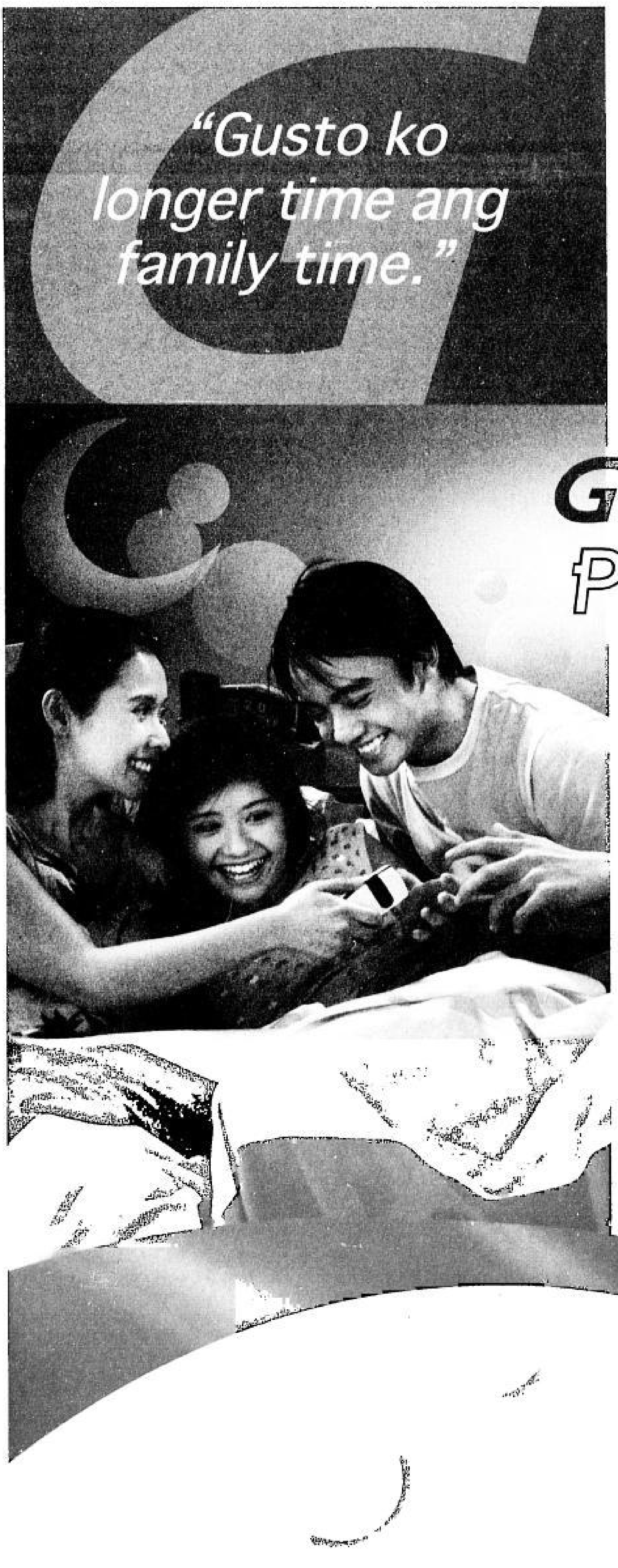

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24 RP seamen snatched in Nigeria

From page A1

Also yesterday, unidentified militants kidnapped an American and a Briton in Nigeria's oil capital Port Harcourt and they were taken to an unknown location, industry sources and police said. Details were sketchy, Agence France Presse reported.

Italians, Chinese, Koreans, too

There has been a sharp rise in the number of kidnappings and attacks on oil installations in the Niger delta since the beginning of last year.

In addition to the Filipinos, two Italians and a Lebanese are also being held as hostages. In the past eight days, one Italian, five Chinese and nine South Korean hostages had been freed by their respective captors.

In 2006, more than 60 foreigners, mostly oil workers, were kidnapped, and dozens of Nigerians were killed by militants and bandits.

Conejos surmised that by yesterday, the seafarers' families—most of whom reside in various parts of the country while some are based in the United States—had been informed of the abduction.

The DFA earlier said that prior to the Jan. 20 abduction, seven Filipinos working in Nigeria had been taken in four different incidents and eventually released.

Nigeria assures RP

In a report from the Nigeria capital of Abuja, Agence France Presse reported that the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo was seeking to reassure the Philippines that it was doing everything in its power to release the Filipinos.

"The foreign minister will be speaking with the representative of the Philippine government here to explain the situation in Nigeria and to say that it is not that we are not doing our best to ensure that those that have been seized get back home safe and sound," Obasanjo's spokesperson, Remi Oyo, told AFP on Monday.

The AFP report mentioned six Filipino hostages and was apparently issued before the clarification was made in Manila that 24 Filipinos had been seized.

DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya told AFP that Nigeria was one of the biggest employers of Filipino workers in Africa, with some 3,900 Filipinos employed at the end of 2006.

According to two different separatist groups in the delta, the Filipinos were abducted by disgruntled youths from a local community rather than by an armed group in the strictest sense, AFP said.

No claim of responsibility

No group has so far directly claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, AFP said.

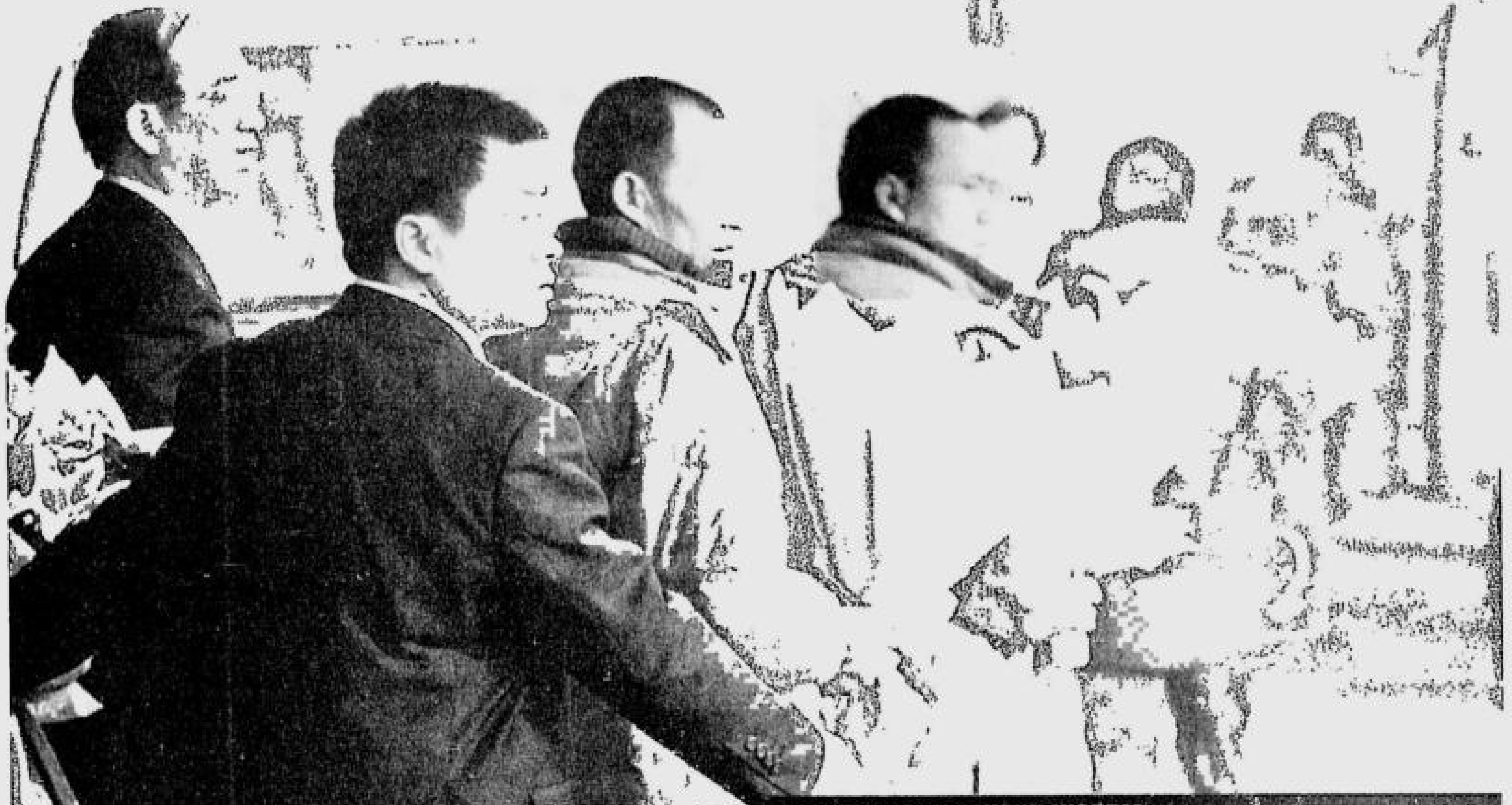
If the DFA report that 24 Filipinos were kidnapped is confirmed, a total of 29 foreigners are currently being held hostage in Nigeria's southern oil producing region, the Niger Delta, just three months ahead of elections due to usher in the country's first ever handover from one civilian administration to another.

A senior Delta State official directly involved in the talks to secure the Filipino hostages' release yesterday confirmed all those on board the ship had been seized, but declined to confirm the exact number of 24.

"I cannot say how many people were on board of the ship. But I am sure all the people on board were seized," Ovie Omo-Agege, who heads the state government team negotiating the men's release, told AFP.

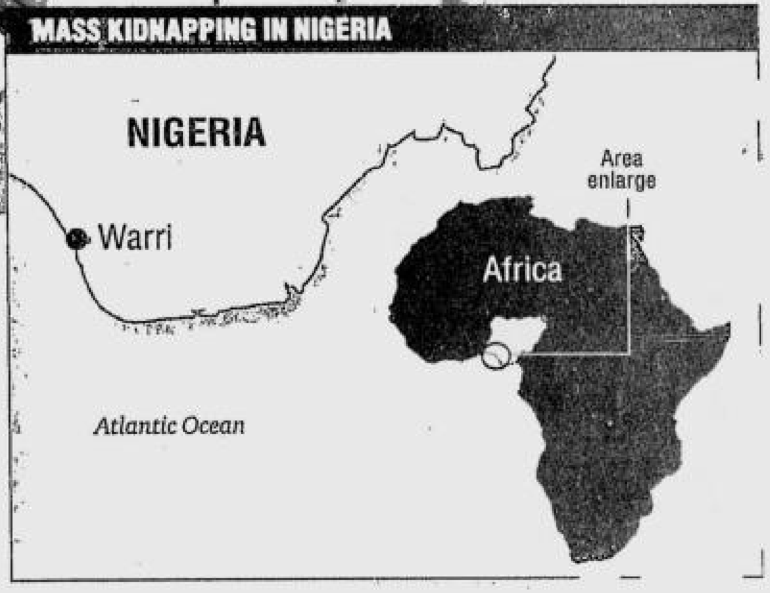
"We are on top of the situation. The men are safe and fine. I can assure you that they will soon be released," he said.

Nigeria, which derives more than 95 percent of its foreign exchange earnings from oil, lost more than half a million barrels a day last year to unrest in the Delta. *With a report from AFP*



FIVE CHINESE RELEASED: After intense work of a team composed of the Chinese Embassy staff and the Sichuan telecom company for two weeks, the Chinese abducted in Nigeria on Jan.5, arrive at the Beijing International Airport on Jan. 22. REUTERS

MASS KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA



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Church group opens 'Pinoy Voters' . . .

From page A1

But having participated in two presidential elections that all but solved the country's lingering socioeconomic problems, she began to look back at the time when she cast her first ballot.

She realized that she and many others with the same voting attitude were partly to blame for what had become of Philippine politics and governance today.

An epiphany of sorts came soon after she attended a voters' education program organized by the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), a Church initiative that began 16 years ago.

Conversions badly needed

Moved, she later confessed to Henrietta de Villa, PPCRV chair and former Philippine ambassador to the Vatican: "We really need to examine the candidates and examine our conscience before casting our ballot."

Quiet, but effective, conversions like this are badly needed if Filipinos are to change the current political culture, De Villa told the INQUIRER yesterday.

"All of us must realize the value of every vote," she said in Filipino. "It shouldn't be wasted on candidates who really have nothing to offer but popularity, money and political influence."

The lesson rings true in each of the thousands of Filipinos—many of them "converts" like the Caloocan voter—now doing volunteer work for the PPCRV.

Come election time, the group organizes a voters' education program that goes around the country mainly through dioceses, vicariates, parishes, and, in many areas outside of Metro Manila, Basic Ecclesiastical Communities (BECs).

BECs generally refer to groups of Catholics gathered to deepen their faith through activities like Bible study and sharing of individual experiences. In many areas in the provinces, they are organized to cover communities hardly reached by priests.

Pinoy Voters' Academy

For the coming May elections, the PPCRV has dubbed its program Pinoy Voters' Academy, taking off from the popular talent search show ostensibly to attract more supporters, especially among the young.

Since the PPCRV began work in September last year, De Villa said her group had covered at least 35 of the country's 86 dioceses.

It has also enlisted the support of several groups—The Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals, Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, Federation of Charismatic Communities and the Council of the Laity of the Philippines.

As in previous elections, De Villa is expecting many familiar faces to beef up the PPCRV effort especially on election and the equally exhaustive days of canvassing.

Simply put, volunteers, like a 30-year-old man from San Miguel, Manila, will most likely be available to help ensure honest elections.

The man once ran into a barangay official who refused to leave the polling precinct after casting his vote. A poll watcher, he asked the official to leave in accordance with election regulations.

Let conscience be guide

But the official was so enraged that he slapped the poll watcher and even sued him afterward. The case was subsequently resolved and the lessons learned remain clear to the erstwhile poll watcher.

For the May elections, De Villa said the man had sought her blessings, saying he was planning to throw his support behind a candidate seeking the mayoral post in Manila.

De Villa said it was beyond the PPCRV's goal to tell which candidates people should specifically root for. She can only hope that the man would be guided by conscience while seeing the bigger picture related to every vote cast.

"Remember that we're doing all this for country and for God," she said.

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

Pursuant to Section 1, Rule 7 of the Rules of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC-009) as amended, the public is hereby invited to the panel interview of the following candidates for the position of **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE of the COURT OF APPEALS** at the Division Hearing Room, Ground Floor, New Supreme Court Building.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 01, 2007
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

1. SALVADOR, FE Q. PALMIANO
2. ZALAMEDA, RODIL V.

The other 19 candidates were already interviewed by the JBC in March and September 2006 for the same position.

January 23, 2007.

MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court &
Ex Officio Secretary

(PDI–Jan. 24, 2007)

BBC int'l survey: 49% say US exerts negative role; 73% against Iraq war

From page A1

organization questioned around 1,000 people in each of the following countries—Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Britain, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Korea, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the United States—between Nov. 3 and Jan. 9. The margin of error averaged 3 percent.

Provoking more conflict

"The US administration's recent decision to send more troops to Iraq is at odds with global public opinion ... This policy is likely to further hurt America's image," said GlobeScan president Doug Miller.

"According to world public opinion, these days the US government hardly seems to be able to do anything right," said Steven Kull, director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, which conducted the survey with GlobeScan.

Overall, the poll shows that 68 percent believe the US military presence in the Middle East provokes more conflict than it prevents; only 17 percent believe US troops there are a stabilizing force.

Seventy-three percent disapprove of the Iraq war while 67 percent disapprove of the way the United States has treated terror suspects detained at Guantanamo Bay.

Sixty-five percent disapprove of the way the United States failed to criticize Israel's war on Hezbollah fighters in southern Lebanon last summer.

And 60 percent disapprove of Washington's strong opposition to allowing Iran a nuclear program. Fifty-six percent disagree with Bush's view that climate problems are not necessarily the result of global warming.

Mainly negative influence

In Britain, America's strongest ally in the Iraq war, 57 percent see US influence as mainly negative, and 81 percent disapprove of US actions in Iraq, the poll shows.

It shows that among US citizens, 57 percent disapprove of how their government is handling the war in Iraq, while 54 percent disapprove of Bush's stance on global warming.

'Most positive'

Half disagree with the US stance on Iran's nuclear program while 53 percent say the US military presence in the Middle East provokes trouble rather than stabilizes matters, and only 33 percent say it is a stabilizing force.

Africa most positive

Kull said African countries were the most positive about America because of the generous aid and investment it had been providing to them.

This year, 70 percent of those polled in Kenya and 72 percent in Nigeria said the United States was a force for good.

According to an AP-AOL News poll taken on Jan. 16-18, Bush's approval rating at home is 36 percent, and 44 percent consider him honest.

That poll showed that only 31 percent of Americans supported Bush's policy of sending more troops to Iraq.

Reports from AP and Reuters

Palace: Case vs govs, mayors out of our hands

By Gil Cabacungan

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY said the dismissal and suspension of governors and mayors were out of its hands because it was only carrying out the orders of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said all the Palace could promise local government officials was that it would study thoroughly the Ombudsman orders before implementing them.

"All of the past suspensions have been carried out for the purpose of the Ombudsman. They were not implemented by the DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government) at the behest of the executive branch," said Ermita in an interview with DZXL radio.

Ermita said the government would look into the election code to determine whether the dismissal and suspension of local government officials could still be carried out during the campaign season.

The Ombudsman claimed that graft cases against local executives could still be carried out during the elections.

Leviste expected in court today

FOR THE FIRST TIME since the shooting that killed his trusted aide, former Batangas governor Antonio Leviste will face his victim's family in a court hearing today.

Leviste is expected to attend this morning's hearing at the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150, where homicide charges were filed against him last week for the shooting of his longtime business associate Rafael de las Alas.

"We will come. He will come," said Henry Capela, Leviste's lawyer, when reached by phone yesterday.

Leviste, estranged husband of former Sen. Loren Legarda, surrendered on Jan. 12 but immediately checked into the Makati Medical Center where he reportedly underwent treatment for a heart ailment. He left the hospital last weekend after posting a P40,000 cash bail.

Leviste, his lawyers said, claimed he shot De las Alas in self-defense after a heated argument inside his office at the ninth floor of LPL Towers on Legaspi Street in Makati City.

However, the victim's family told investigators they believe De las Alas was murdered, noting that he suffered five gunshot wounds—one on his left forearm, three on his face, and one just above his nape.

Judge Elmo Alameda is expected to rule on the prosecution's request to defer Leviste's arraignment pending the Department of Justice's reinvestigation of the case, and possibly the upgrading of charges from homicide to murder.

Earlier, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez was quoted in media as saying he had doubts about the homicide charge filed by city prosecutors.

"The number of shots fired shows there is evident premeditation [on the part of Leviste] because if you just want to maim somebody without really an intent to kill, you will not fire more than one shot." *Tarra Quismundo*

UP High class '68 reunion

UP HIGH SCHOOL Class 1968 will hold its 39th anniversary reunion on Feb. 3 at the Lorenzo Room, Albergus Restaurant on Capitol Drive, Old Balara, Q.C.

A P500 fee covers the cost of dinner and entertainment. Jam with the *barkada* and discuss projects and plans for the UPHS68 grand ruby jubilee reunion in 2008.

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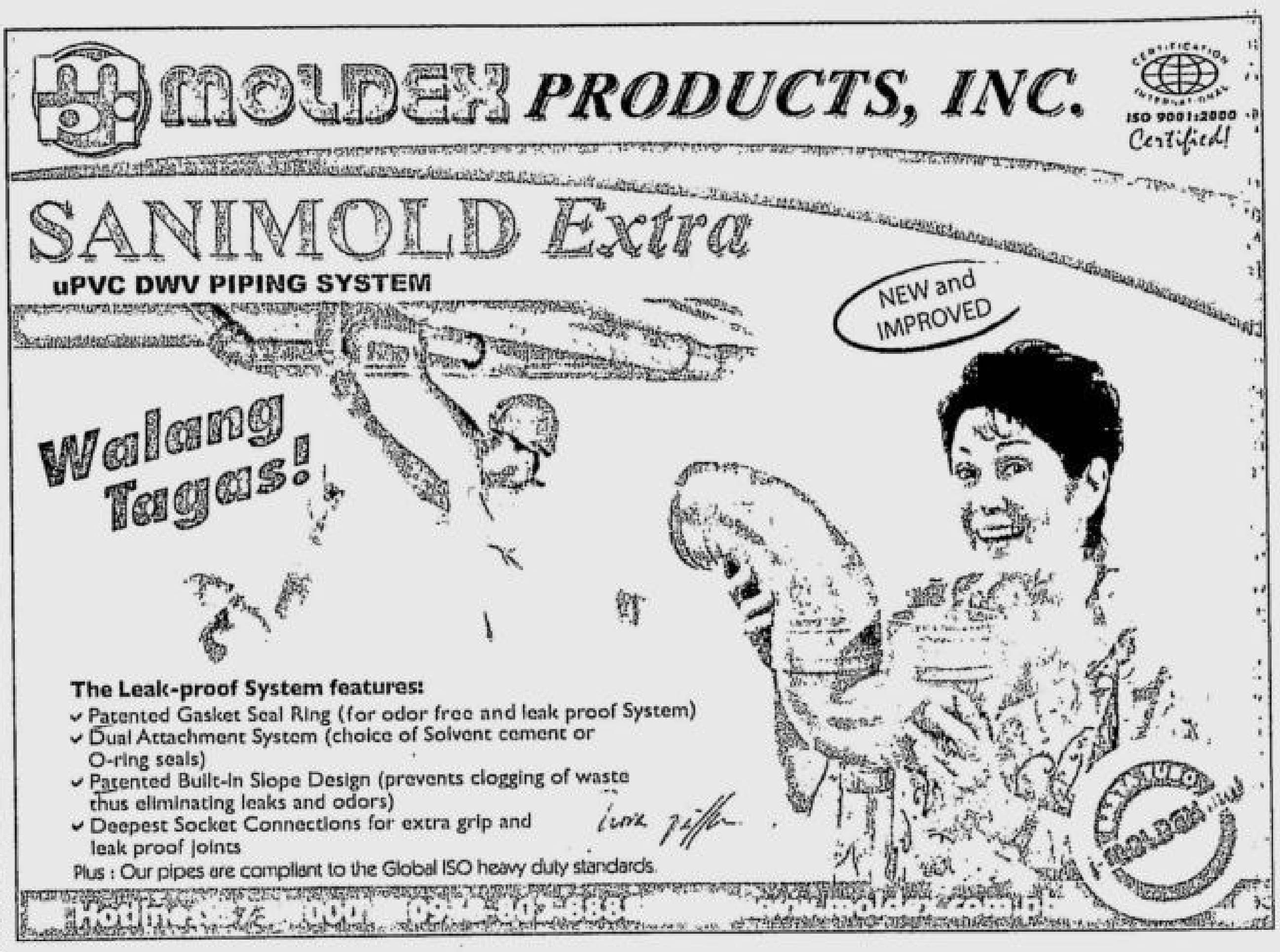
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The long and short of Vigan 'longganiza'

From page A1

And the Philippines' Bigueños are no slouches in longganiza-eating matches, as they proved in a competition here on Monday.

The Bigueños tried to break the record of Takeru "The Tsunami" Kobayashi—the six-time champion of the annual Independence Day hot dog-eating competition in the United States—by downing as many Vigan longganiza as they could in three minutes.

They could have beaten Kobayashi's record of 53 and 3/4 hot dogs in 12 minutes had they kept at it, organizers of the competition said.

Joselito Galace, a potter from Pagburnayan village in Vigan, consumed 18 longganiza in three minutes—or, if he had gone on at that pace, 72 longganiza in 12 minutes.

Galace said he could have been good for a few more, but not 72.

Another potter from the same village also ate 18 pieces, but he was still chewing two minutes after the end of the countdown.

One apparent problem was that the competing Bigueños were chewing the longganiza carefully, while Kobayashi was just wolfing down hot dogs in the US competitions held yearly since 2001.

Very expensive

In the women's category, 27-year-old Mary Joy Rabon of Fatima village downed 13 longganiza in three minutes, beating eight other contestants.

By way of explaining her feat, Rabon said in Ilocano: "We were so excited to watch the parade that I forgot to take my lunch. I only ate three spoonfuls of rice for breakfast."

Rabon said the biggest number of longganiza she had eaten was six.

THE FEAST begins in Vigan City with the longganiza eating contest Tuesday.

LEONCIO BALBIN JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

"They are very expensive," she pointed out.

Vigan longganiza, made of lean pork and generous fat, sells for between P80 and P90 a dozen at the public market and other outlets in the city.

Another problem for the contestants was that the longganiza are linked together with string, which often got in the way of their chewing.

Rabon, however, employed a technique: She used her right hand to take out the string and her left hand to push the longganiza into her mouth.

Festival highlight

Vigan longganiza was the highlight of the Longganiza Festival held here on Monday. The festival was Vigan's way of celebrating its sixth year as a city.

After the eating contest, dancers paraded around the Vigan Heritage Village wearing costumes made of faux longganiza, *inabel* (Ilocano cotton weave), tiger grass and other ornaments.

Between 70 and 80 pigs are butchered daily in the city's slaughterhouse, according to Mayor Ferdinand Medina.

The meat of about 30 pigs goes to longganiza production, and the rest is used for "bagnet" (deep-fried chunks of pork, another famous Ilocano dish) and for local consumption.

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 16 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Spouses of leaders savor Cebu hospitality"—misspelled the name of the 12th Asean summit spokesperson. The spokesperson's name is Victoriano Lecaros—not Lecaro.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a caption of a Page A3 photo showing a member of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption conferring with the children of the slain aide of Antonio "Tony" Leviste misspelled the victim's name. The victim's name is Rafael—not Efren—de las Alas.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 19 ISSUE, the headline of a front-page story about a priest deported by Philippine immigration authorities—"Deported UK priest on mine panel wants RP to explain"—misstated the nationality of Fr. Frank Nally, head of the Solidarity Desk of the Columban Fathers in the United Kingdom. Nally is an Irish—not a UK (United Kingdom)—priest.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 20 ISSUE, the same mistake was made in the headline of a Page A5 story—"We've nothing to explain, BI tells UK cleric."

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, two front-page stories—"Janjalani confirmed dead" and "Mama always cooked 'tinola' for her 'bunso'"—misstated the age of Khadaffy Janjalani. Janjalani was 31—not 33—years old when he was killed. He was born in March 1975.

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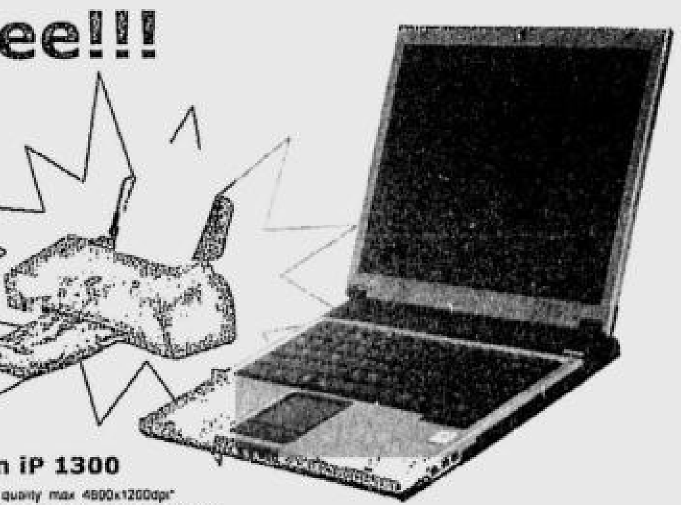

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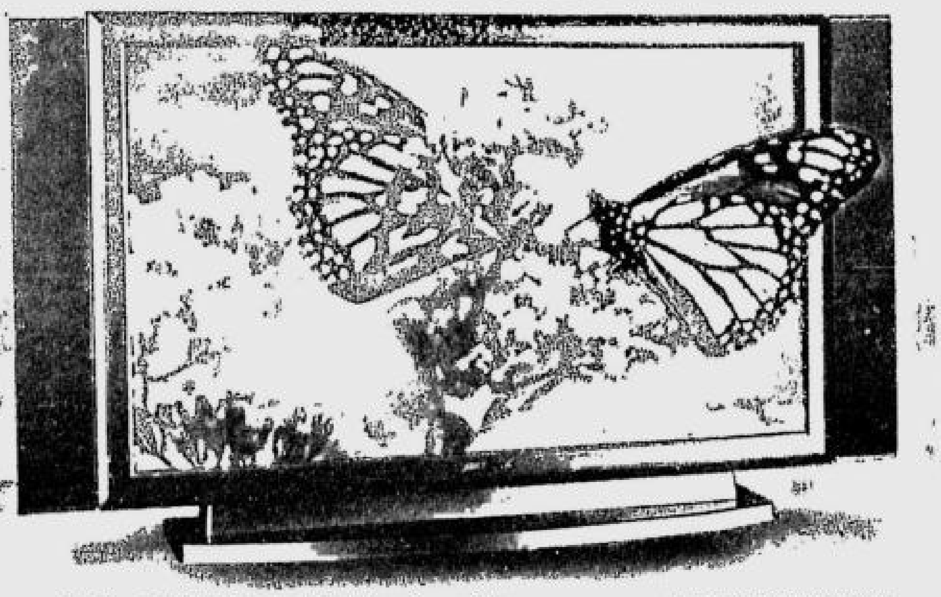

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FQS leader fighting for life

By Miko L. Morelos

A FUND-RAISING BENEFIT SHOW WILL BE held at the University of the Philippines Film Center on Jan. 25 to raise funds for First Quarter Storm Movement president Monico Atienza, who suffered a stroke and has been comatose since Dec. 23.

Atienza, a poet and professor of Philippine Literature at the UP, was a founding member of the Kabataang Makabayan, the nationalist youth movement that led the protest storm against former President Ferdinand Marcos in the late '60s and early '70s.

Atienza was one of several prominent student leaders detained after the declaration of martial law in 1972. Released in 1980, he survived an ambush in 1987, barely a year after a people power revolt toppled the Marcos dictatorship. With a shrapnel still lodged in his head, he took up a teaching position at the UP College of Arts and Letters and continued his social justice advocacy.

The tribute, starting at 6:30 p.m., is being organized by friends and colleagues—calling themselves Task Force Monico Atienza—to help shoulder his medical expenses at the Philippine General Hospital where he is confined. Bonifacio Ilagan, chair of the FQS movement, said Atienza's sole source of income was his teaching position.

For donations and inquiries, contact Marie Olayta or Susan Alcantara of UP's Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature at 924-4899 and 929-0113.

Boracay-bound Danish tourist with marijuana held

By Nikko Dizon

A DANISH MAN'S HOLIDAY IN BORACAY was scuttled after police caught him with two sticks of alleged marijuana at the Manila Domestic Airport over the weekend.

Suspect Ole Nielsen Stroman, a tourist, was held by the Aviation Security Group (ASG).

He was a passenger of Asian Spirit flight 6K 881 last Sunday and was already at the final security check when ASG policemen saw a pack of cigarettes inside a pocket of his gray shorts.

Upon inspection, police saw that Stroman had two sticks of alleged marijuana along with five cigarette sticks.

He was turned over to agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) assigned at the airport for further investigation.

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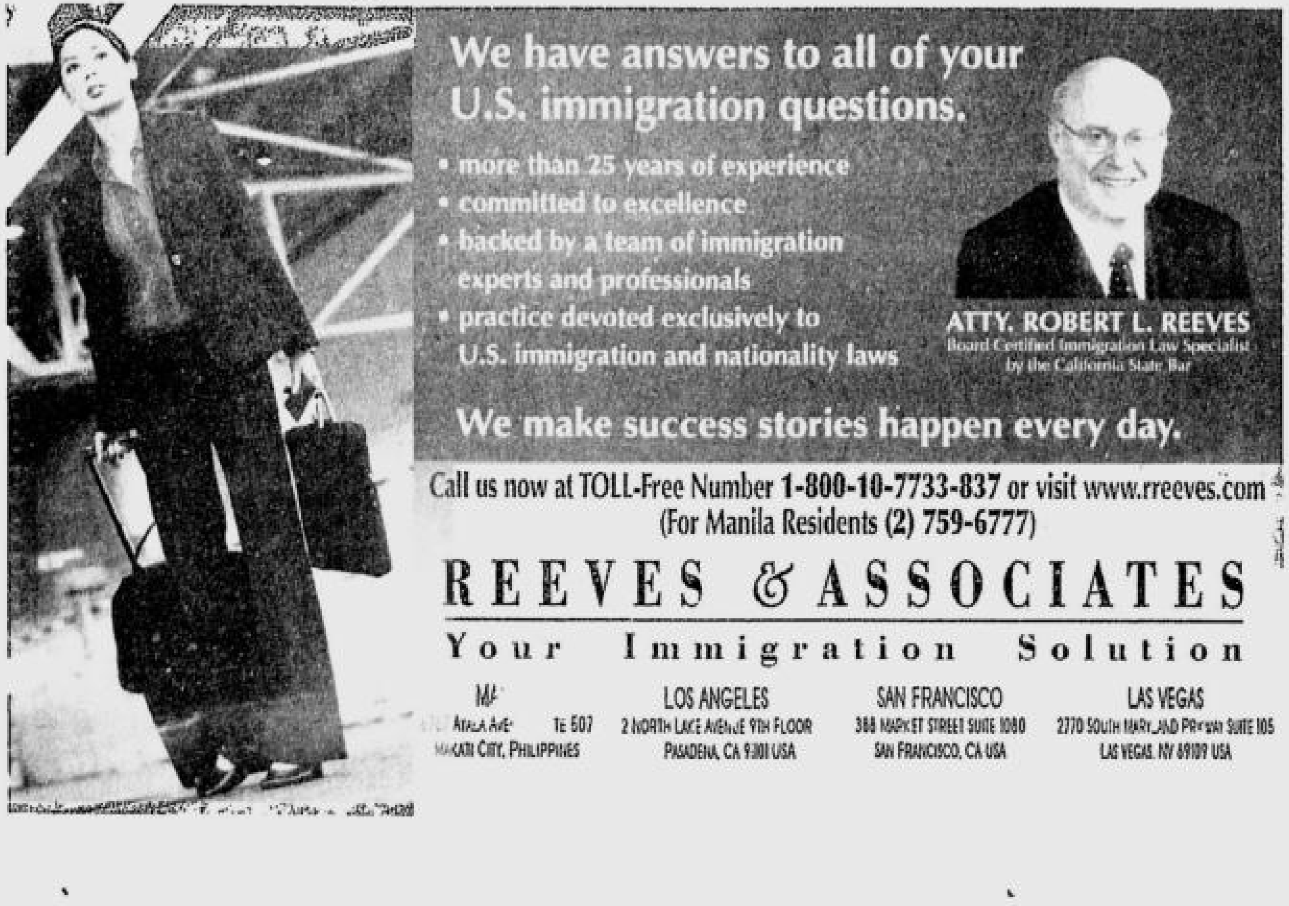

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ISSN 0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 22 No. 47
OPINION
Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Website: opinion.inquirer.net
Text us your feedback: inquirer opi name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000
100% soy ink

Puppets

EDITORIAL

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1943, A GROUP OF AMERICAN officials appointed by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt had a meeting with the Commonwealth government-in-exile. The meeting, which took place on Oct. 10, 1943, was about the date of Philippine independence, set for 1946. Judge Samuel Rosenman suggested that independence could come earlier via a resolution passed by the US Congress—on the condition that a guarantee of American military bases be included.

Philippine President-in-exile Manuel L. Quezon snapped at the Americans: "If you yourselves include that provision, the independence of the Philippines will be like that of Manchukuo." He was referring to the puppet state established by the Japanese in Manchuria. Had the provision for the retention of US bases in the Philippines after its independence been included in the resolution without the consent of the Philippine government, it would have been tantamount to having a puppet-style independence.

It was agreed at that meeting that the date of Philippine independence should be honored, regardless of Japanese occupation; and that American military and naval bases should be retained in the Philippines after independence, but only at the behest of the independent Philippine government itself, "for the mutual protection of both nations as well as for the maintenance of peace in the Pacific."

In other words, the American panel was rebuffed, not least because it did not expect a Philippine government in exile on American soil to even try to bargain, much less say no thanks, not under such conditions.

This early example of Philippine diplomacy showed the status quo (what was agreed was simply to reiterate the agreements that existed before World War II) was preferable to a surrender under duress.

Independence would have to come first, and if an independent Philippine government felt that hosting US bases were advantageous, it could then ask for negotiations. But not before. And indeed, independence would come first, two administrations later, but an important consideration had by then, been forgotten. It was America that asked for bases, and it was "asking" a Philippines that lay in ruins and was in no real position to say no. The United States was blind to the long-term consequences of such a "request," not least because by then Philippine presidents were less prickly and more accommodating of America's desires.

The nuances of what happened in 1943 were lost on successor governments as early as 1946 and they are utterly beyond the understanding of President Macapagal-Arroyo. As one diplomatic observer put it, "The President didn't even have the diplomatic foresight to ask America to help her save face as she prepared to hand over Daniel Smith—so exceedingly accommodating of American desires, so solicitous of US support and so unwilling to risk even a moment of US displeasure is she."

INQUIRER columnist Rina Jimenez-David described how American officials profusely apologized for the disgraceful conduct of an American servicemen who had not yet been convicted but merely accused of abusing an elderly South Korean lady. And she observed, "While the South Koreans immediately moved to arrest the suspect and hold him in captivity, Filipino officials first tried to lose the rape case and impugn the victim, and then—frustrated by Judge (Benjamin) Pozon's decision—bent over backwards to do the Americans' bidding. Where would Smith be, we must ask, if he had raped a South Korean instead of a Filipina?"

Randy David pointed out the moral of many tales, including the one with which we began this editorial, and the contrast between South Korea and the Philippines today: What need has another nation of bullying, when another nation it might want to bully cringes even before the first slap? And in anticipation of that slap, vows instant obedience?

The defect is this: South Korea knows Washington needs its bases in the peninsula more than the Koreans do. In contrast, our leaders' hierarchy of values tells them it is better to preside over a scorned people than to risk the ire of Washington.

The last puppet emperor of Manchukuo, Pu-Yi, would have been pleased.

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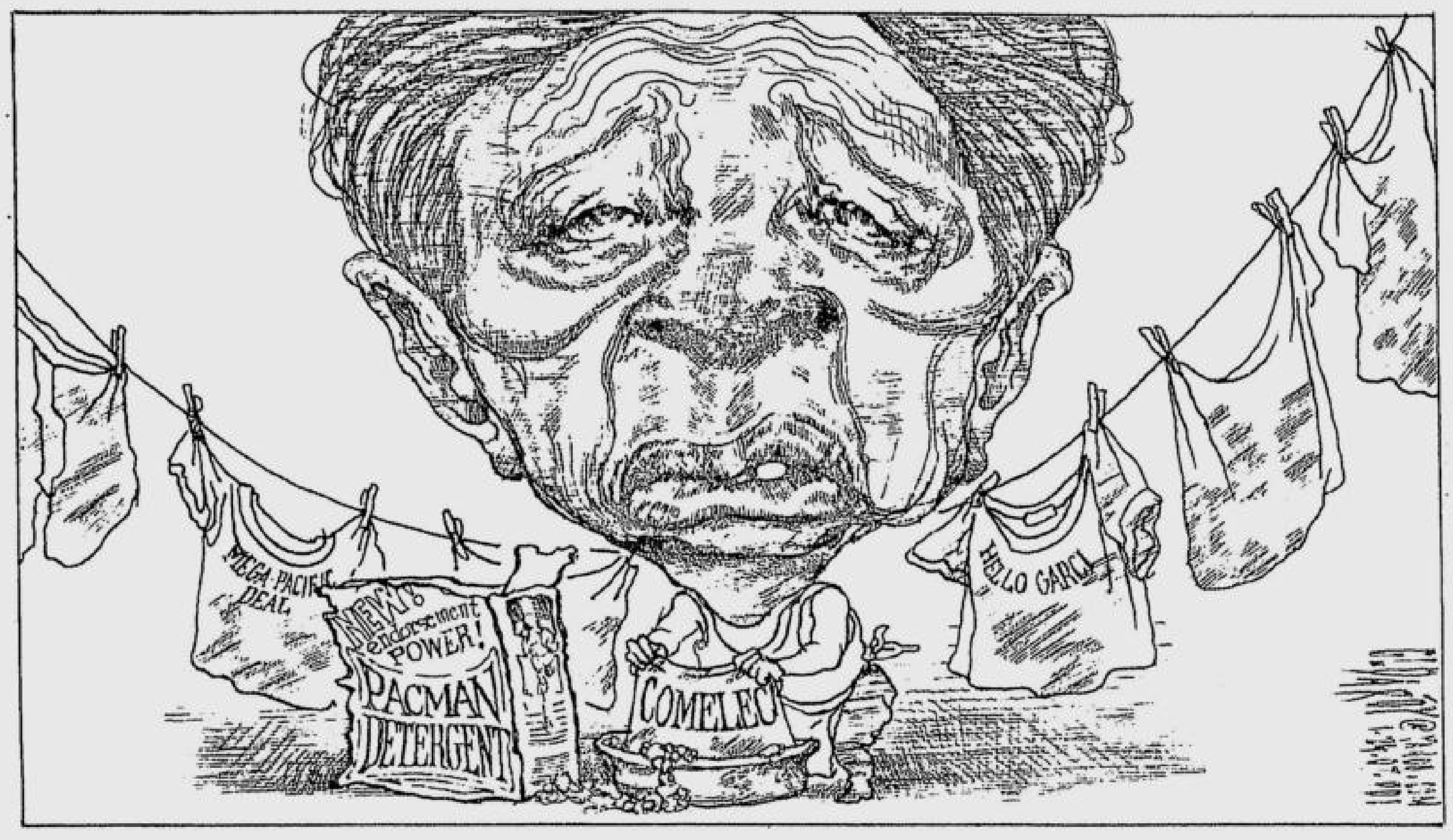


Foreign firm wants Epira law amended

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

MALACAÑANG BOASTS THAT WITH THE death of Khadaffy Janjalani, leader of the Abu Sayyaf group, the terrorist gang is finished and peace and order will return to Sulu. Indeed, it behaves as if it is Zorro or Robin Hood who has been killed.

In the first place, it is not at all that certain that the corpse they dug up was that of Janjalani in spite of the alleged results of the DNA testing. That is only the government's claim. The family claims otherwise. Wouldn't it be to Janjalani's advantage to let the government believe he is dead? And with the $5 million (P250 million) bounty on his head, wouldn't it be clever to have one of his own men point to a cadaver and say it is Janjalani, and then share the reward with whoever would get it?

In the second place, that was neither Zorro nor Robin Hood they have killed. That was only an ordinary bandit. Any other bandit can take his place as leader of the group. Even Zorro had successors, like the Phantom, the ghost who walks, the man who never dies.

Other leaders of the group have been killed or captured before, but others took over and the Abu Sayyaf continued. So it is premature to exult that it is almost finished just because one cadaver has been exhumed.

* * *

Ehem, a Church anti-corruption advocacy group, is right: Don't ask favors from politicians. It gives them the excuse to steal taxpayers' money when they get to power. It serves to dull their conscience about stealing.

Corruption sometimes is caused by the voters themselves who ask for team uniforms, balls, basketball courts, barangay halls, etc. from politicians.

Since the campaign season is here, this is the time for voters to milk candidates of favors. Opportunists think this is the time to get even with candidates. Little do they know that what the candidates will give them will come from the taxes they pay, some of which will remain in the politicians' pockets.

* * *

In another letter to the editor last Monday, Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman refuted what Msgr. Ramon Tronqued said in his own letter published in the Jan. 15 column. Lagman said I should not have believed the priest.

Well, between a priest and a politician, between the congressman and the monsignor, whom would you believe?

* * *

The Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) law, which was passed to rationalize the power supply sector and lower electricity rates, is only a few years old and already the Department of Energy wants it amended to favor a foreign-owned independent power producer (IPP). Why did we bother to enact the law if the government itself would be the first to violate it?

The German power firm Steag AG wants to expand in the Philippines but says it needs "a legal framework which is not there for the time being in the Epira." As if taking a cue from the German firm, Energy Secretary Rafael Lotilla says they can get around the Epira law and are inclined to accommodate Steag AG for a new power supply agreement despite its being new in the country.

Lotilla was referring to Section 71 of the law which requires a declaration by the President of a crisis situation, primarily in energy-starved Mindanao which the expanded plant can service with the upgrading of transmission facilities. By such simple declaration, the President can ask Congress to give its authorization and presto! the crisis is solved.

But wait, is Lotilla confirming that there already is a crisis situation in Mindanao? Or is he making up that situation to favor Steag?

Lotilla's admission only makes us consumers nervous, remembering what past energy (Napocor included) officials did to our country in the 1990s. Do we have to remind him that Napocor went bankrupt and forced consumers to pay more for their electricity as a result of the entry of several IPPs, most of which are tainted with corruption?

The $305-million coal-fired Steag AG power plant sits on a 55-hectare property inside the Phividec Industrial Estate in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental. It has an estimated capacity of 200 megawatts and should have enough capacity to service several key areas in Mindanao. Steag AG, despite being new in the business, has the gall to propose to increase its capacity by 150 MW if Epira is amended. It wants to change the rules in the middle of the game.

With Epira, the government can no longer enter into build-operate-transfer (BOT) schemes for the construction of power plants since it is privatizing Napocor's generating plants. Steag AG's power plant is the last IPP contracted by the government before Epira was enacted six years ago.

Amid concerns raised by foreign power investors over Napocor's inability to contract power from new projects, Lotilla's proposal was met with strong opposition from the government and the public which would carry the burden of more government guarantees and higher electricity rates.

The Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC) said it sees no need to amend Epira to attract foreign investments. Rep. Arnulfo Fuentebella, JCPC chair and co-author of the Epira law, said the country should work proactively to implement the power reform law, a key intent of which is to boost foreign investments as the industry opens up to competition. JCPC was created by Epira and is composed of members of Congress to review, assess and recommend any changes in the law.

The vision of Epira was to free government from continuing to fund power projects and giving guarantees to these private companies which is bad for the country's financial condition.

Remember that much of the problems we face are due to government's overcontracting of power and guaranteeing profits through these BOT contracts in the 1990s.

The last word

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ART BUCHWALD HAD A VERY INTERESTING announcement last week. "Hi," he said on an obituary video, "I'm Art Buchwald and I just died."

Buchwald, a Pulitzer Prize winner, bit the dust at 81 last Thursday in the United States, after accomplishing his mission in life, which was "to make people laugh." He did that while writing a humor-filled column for five decades. He ended as he had begun.

While at this though, my favorite American columnist of that generation isn't Buchwald, it is Russell Baker. Thank God he remains with us, even if his hold on this earth is slowly slipping. He's a year older than Buchwald and a veritable font of wit and wisdom, the one often indistinguishable from the other. His funniest statements contain gems of insight, such as, "Usually, terrible things that are done with the excuse that progress requires them are not really progress at all but just terrible things."

To go back: Buchwald's announcement made me recall some pretty slick deathbed utterances, and I went on to look them up in the world library, also called the Internet. I was astonished by the sheer abundance of them. We can all do with laughing in the face of adversity today—in lieu of heckling a non-president, which the audience of El Divo already brilliantly did last weekend—and we can't do better than to laugh in the face of death.

The utterances I picked out are outstanding in that regard. I disregarded the more serious ones, like Jesus Christ's "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," or Julius Caesar's "Et tu, Brute?" in favor of the more outrageous ones. John Donne did say, "Death, be not proud," and Dylan Thomas did declare, "Death shall have no dominion." But somehow the lines below seem to say it better, helped in no small way by the fact that their authors put their bodies where their mouths were. You get to have the image of the swashbuckling Errol Flynn, sword in hand and grin on mouth, daring death catch up with him, or do its worst.

Or you get to have a sense of people fighting to have the last word.

P. T. Barnum, entrepreneur, d. 1891: "How were the receipts today at Madison Square Garden?"

John Barrymore, actor, d. May 29, 1942: "Die? I should say not, dear fellow. No Barrymore would allow such a conventional thing to happen to him."

Ludwig van Beethoven, d. March 26, 1827: "Friends applaud, the comedy is over."

Humphrey Bogart, d. Jan. 14, 1957: "I should never have switched from Scotch to Martinis."

Elizabeth I, Queen of England, d. 1603: "All my possessions for a moment of time."

Ernesto "Che" Guevara, d. Oct. 9, 1967 (while facing his assassin): "I know you have come to kill me. Shoot coward, you are only going to kill a man."

Edmund Gwenn, actor, d. Sept. 6, 1959 (asked if dying was tough): "Yes, it's tough, but not as tough as doing comedy."

Timothy Leary, d. May 31, 1996: "Why not? Yeah."

Karl Marx, d. 1883 (to a housekeeper who wanted to know if he had any last words): "Go on, get out, last words are for fools who haven't said enough."

Eugene O'Neill, d. Nov. 27, 1953: "I knew it. I knew it. Born in a hotel room—and God damn it—died in a hotel room."

Anna Pavlova, ballerina, d. 1931: "Get my swan costume ready."

Dylan Thomas, d. 1953: "I've had 18 straight whiskies, I think that's the record . . ."

Anton Chekhov, d. 1904 (from TB): "It's been a long time since I've had champagne."

Oscar Wilde, writer, d. Nov. 30, 1900: "Either that wallpaper goes, or I do."

Marie Antoinette, after accidentally stepping on the foot of her executioner on the way to the guillotine: "Pardonnez-moi, monsieur." (Pardon me, sir.)

John Jacob Astor, the richest man in the world, while about to board a lifeboat with his family during the sinking of the Titanic, to his wife (his second and his great love, Madeleine) upon seeing a desperate female passenger: "The ladies have to go first. . . . Get in the lifeboat, to please me. . . . Goodbye, dearie. I'll see you later."

Lord Chesterfield, an absolute gentleman, to a servant when his godson visited him as he lay dying: "Give Dayrolles a chair."

Archimedes, to a Roman solider who was arresting him during the Roman invasion of Carthage, while working out a mathematical problem on the ground: "Don't step on my equation!" (The soldier killed him.)

Charlie Chaplin, after being told by a priest, "May the Lord have mercy on your soul": "Why not? After all, it belongs to him."

General John Sedgwick, Union commander, shot dead in 1864 while surveying the field of battle: "They couldn't hit an elephant at this dist. . . .

Dominique Bouhours, French grammarian, d. 1702: "I am about to—or I am going to—die. Either expression is correct."

Marquis de Favras, on his way to the guillotine, after being shown his official death sentence by the clerk of court: "I see that you have made three spelling mistakes."

John Fields, musician, asked on his deathbed if he was a Papist or a Calvinist: "I am a pianist."

Joe Hill, legendary unionist, while about to be executed for murder: "Don't mourn for me. Organize!"

Saint Lawrence, martyr, while burning at the stake: "Turn me. I am roasted on one side."

James French, plain murderer, while about to be electrocuted in 1966: "How about this for a headline: 'French fries'?"

'Hand of steel' of state terrorism

(Concluded from Monday)

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

A DAY AFTER POLICE COMMANDOS STORMED the Iloilo Provincial Capitol to evict Gov. Niel Tupas Sr., President Macapagal-Arroyo commended the Marines for the slaying of Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Solaiman. She also told the convention of the League of Cities of the Philippines at the Manila Hotel that her administration was determined "to finish the job" of crushing Abu Sayyaf terrorism with a "hand of steel."

On Wednesday, the day of the raid, the government unsheathed the "hand of steel" at the Iloilo Capitol not against terrorists but against a hapless group of Tupas' supporters assembled in the capitol.

The assault sent out two menacing messages that shocked the nation: first, the "hand of steel" policy was not reserved exclusively for the Abu Sayyaf and extended to the regime's political opponents; second, it demonstrated in full that state terrorism has become an instrument of the regime to crush not only the Abu Sayyaf and the long-running communist insurgency but also any form of legal opposition.

To appreciate the full extent of the application of the doctrine of state terrorism in Iloilo, it should be emphasized that the 200-strong, overwhelmingly armed police task force assaulted not a stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf but the capitol to serve a dismissal order from the Office of the Ombudsman on Tupas and other provincial officials. The raiders, using sophisticated automatic weapons, imagined they were mounting an assault on a band of terrorists holding hostages. But there was no such thing in the capitol to justify the excessive show of force. The assault was reminiscent of the Kempetai atrocities as they launched their nocturnal raids on civilian homes during the Japanese occupation.

The Iloilo assault has left a nightmarish scenario of state terrorism coming into full play during the past two years, driven by the administration's campaign to eradicate the communist insurgency by the end of the President's term and characterized by the immensely huge toll of extrajudicial killings of suspected leftists and journalists. (The International Federation of Journalists recently reported that the Philippines has become the second deadliest country for journalists, next to Iraq in 2006. Thirteen Filipino journalists died during the year, bringing to 49 the number murdered by unknown assailants since Ms Arroyo took office in 2001.)

The TV footage of the Iloilo raid vividly portrays the atrocity of state-sponsored violence and foreshadows the atmosphere of violence in the forthcoming mid-term elections where rivalry for congressional seats and local offices is expected to be overheated. A replay of the footage in town plazas across the country should arouse alarm over the administration's state terrorism doctrine and the dangers facing Philippine democracy if this is not stopped by an electoral defeat for the government in the May election. That footage is a powerful counter-weapon that does not cost much compared to the pork barrel the government is prepared to splurge.

The footage shows a 65-member strike force of the 6th Regional Mobile Group from Negros Occidental leading a 200-strong police force in the storming of the capitol. The troops smashed locks at the main gate and a glass door to gain entry into the building. The troops, in anti-riot gear, were armed with automatic rifles and machine guns and had their fingers on the trigger. They dispersed a few hundred supporters of Tupas gathered at the capitol entrance. Niel Jr., Tupas' son and a member of the provincial board, suffered bruises after the police pushed and kicked him.

Local journalists said policemen pointed M-16 rifles at them. The police crashed in after Tupas refused to obey orders from the Department of Interior and Local Government implementing the decision of the Ombudsman dismissing him on charges of graft and corruption. Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno ordered the police assault after Tupas ignored Puno's ultimatum to step down in 48 hours to make way for Vice Gov. Roberto Armada. A timely temporary restraining order from the Court of Appeals in Cebu stopped the raid and the arrest of Tupas.

The danger from the administration's doctrine of state terrorism is far from over. The reaction of the Arroyo administration to the raid aggravated the episode and revealed the dangerous mentality behind the doctrine. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez criticized Chair Purificacion Quisumbing of the Commission on Human Rights for saying she was shocked to see heavily armed policemen breaking into the capitol. Gonzalez derided the CHR chair for condemning the raid even though she was "not on the scene and has no basis for making such statements."

Gonzalez said Puno ordered the troops to storm the capitol after receiving information that released prisoners, armed men and New People's Army rebels were inside the capitol. But Senior Supt. Pedro Merced, 6th Regional Mobile Group commander, belied Gonzalez's claims, saying that "when we entered we were surprised that there were no armed men."

Puno infuriated many when he defended the police, saying, "They should not be condemned. They should even be commended." He declared the assault a success "in general," and added, "I did not see any deployment of unnecessary forces. There were no serious injuries. No shots were fired."

Maybe Puno switched off the TV when the raid was under way. But words like these produce a widespread public backlash.

A voice for peace

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I FIRST HEARD NORAIDA'S STORY SOME years ago when Community and Family Services International (CFSI), a 25-year-old NGO working in the Philippines and in the region, sponsored a forum to launch a report on the impact of armed conflict on women, children and families in Mindanao.

At the time, Noraida Adang Abdullah Karim was a social worker for CFSI. What made her story especially compelling was that she was herself a "child of displacement," joining her family as they fled their home in the face of hostilities, and growing up in evacuation centers and with relatives as she sought to carve out a "normal" life for herself.

That she was able to do, earning a degree in social work and community development and returning to Mindanao to work among people who shared her fate—other displaced families and communities.

Most recently, Noraida was named a recipient of the Voices of Courage Award to be given by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children at an awards luncheon in New York City on May 10. Aside from the recognition, Noraida has been chosen to deliver the keynote address at the awards rites, enabling her, as a press release from CFSI states, "to expand her advocacy efforts on behalf of women, children and youth in the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao."

The Voices of Courage Awards are presented each year to people or organizations from around the world that have shown commitment and leadership to promote the well-being of displaced women, children and youth.

* * *

THIS will be the third time I'll be re-telling Noraida's story in this space, but what the heck, I believe it bears re-telling and endless repeating.

Born in Cotabato City in 1970, Noraida spent most of her formative years in Datu Piang, Maguindanao. Her childhood and youth were marked by poverty, repeated displacement due to armed conflict and a determined desire to survive. She finished high school in 1988, earning her tuition by selling foodstuff in the streets of Cotabato and working as house help in the home of relatives. Like many others, she left war-torn Mindanao in hopes of finding safety in Manila. Noraida spent the next five years assisting other displaced Muslims in Metro Manila organize to meet basic needs and advocate for peace negotiations in Mindanao.

The peace agreement of 1996 set the stage for Noraida's return to Mindanao. She began working with local civil society organizations concerned with human rights, the situation of displaced persons and livelihood projects for poor women. Noraida also went back to school, completing a degree in social work at De La Vida College in Cotabato City in 1999. Later, she taught social work at the same college.

War broke out again in 2000, resulting in the displacement of more than 930,000 people and the beginning of CFSI activity in Mindanao.

A licensed and highly experienced social worker, Noraida began her service with CFSI in March 2001 as community organizing officer, helping large numbers of internally displaced persons to return to their communities of origin and begin making the transition from conflict to peace. She subsequently played a leading role in the Literacy, Livelihood and Food Sufficiency Project for women and male youth that CFSI field-tested for the World Bank. Noraida then stepped up to lead the Arms are for Hugging Project that has helped ensure over 600 former out-of-school children and youth gain access to primary education in their own community in Inug-ug, Pagalungan, Maguindanao.

* * *

NORAIDA is now officer in charge of CFSI operations in Mindanao and concurrently coordinator of the Food Assistance Project that CFSI is carrying out in conflict-affected communities in Maguindanao in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP).

CFSI states that "all those who have seen her work know that Noraida has significantly contributed to the safety and well-being of very large numbers of people. Many have been impressed by her hard work, strength of character, courage and humility."

Happily married to Ustadz Hashem E. Abdullah Karim, Noraida says CFSI is "an excellent example of servant leadership and the best of CFSI. The mission of CFSI is to protect and promote human security, specifically the lives, well-being and dignity of people uprooted by persecution, armed conflict, disasters and other exceptionally difficult circumstances."

CFSI nominated Noraida for the Voices of Courage Award, upon the recommendation of board member Sheila Platt, who is best known among Filipinos as the wife of former US Ambassador Nicholas Platt, but who is a psychologist in her own right.

* * *

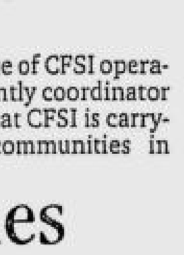
TO BOLSTER their letter of nomination, CFSI requested letters of support from other institutions and friends and supporters. I was one of those requested to send in a letter of support, and in my letter, I said that Noraida has time and again lent her voice, often literally, to tell her personal story and glean lessons from her life experience and work with CFSI.

I remember writing, too, that as a journalist I found Noraida's story compelling and touching, because she had turned her own experience of displacement into inspiration to live a life of service to her people.

I would like to delude myself that my words "made a difference," in the words of Steve Muncy, CFSI executive director. But really, all the credit should go to Noraida and her co-workers, who by their life and work prove that peace-building is a never-ending process, and that peace is not an end in itself but a means toward achieving a better life for families, communities and societies.

Congratulations, Noraida, and keep using your voice and your story to make change happen in Mindanao and elsewhere!

Surnames



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

EVERY SEMESTER WHEN WE DISCUSS THE NAtional hero's early life in class, we exchange stories that have been handed down to us by tradition in an attempt to separate fact from fiction, myth from reality. Everyone remembers the story of the *gasera* and *gamu-gamo* but fail to see it as a variation on the Greek myth of Icarus. Most students know about the pair of *tsinelas* thrown down the river, but are perplexed when asked to explain the reason for this allegedly generous act of kindness. Many students can rattle off the now proverbial line about loving one's language lest he or she be worse than a *hayop* or *malansang isda*, but few know how Rizal accidentally spilled a cup of chocolate on his breakfast of fried rice and thus invented *champorado*!

One of the rewards of university teaching is to see students' faces light up as they realize that they have outgrown what they were previously taught in the elementary and high school level. Then I ask why Francisco Mercado and Teodora Alonso had a son who carried a different surname from the rest of the family. When Rizal was a student, he wondered why his elder brother and nine sisters were all Mercados. He suspected that he was adopted or, worse, illegitimate. The standard textbook explanation is that when Spanish Governor-General Narciso Claveria made Filipinos adopt surnames in 1849, they were asked to choose from a compilation known as "Catalogo alfabetico de apellidos." We are told that being a family that tilled the land, they wanted Rizal [actually *risal* in the "Catalogo"] which meant "green fields." However, they were forced to take Mercado, which meant "market."

We are taught that Paciano Mercado stopped schooling in Manila because of the terrible events of 1872, that he never returned to the university because he was associated with the martyred Fr. Jose Burgos, and thus Jose used a different surname to dissociate him from Paciano. However, the eminent Dominican historian Fidel Villaroel, citing Rizal's academic records, shows that the hero not only used Mercado or Rizal, he sometimes used both surnames. This is something that needs further investigation.

I discuss surnames because like everyone else afflicted by spam in their mailbox, I noted that the people or companies sending these are getting smart. In the past you looked at the message title and deleted anything that had to do with computers, Xenical or penis enlargers. Now the message says "Re." So you take a second look to see if you know or e-mailed anyone named Smith, Kaputnik or Berkowitz. Today the spammers send us messages with Hispanic-sounding names like Cruz, Guerrero or Bautista, thus adding yet another daily task to screen our e-mail.

The fact that many Filipinos carry Spanish surnames makes people abroad assume that we speak or at least know Spanish, not knowing that a man named Narciso Claveria decreed that Filipinos take surnames not just to put order in society but to make census and taxation easier to implement.

Claveria was so organized that he even set the Philippine calendar for 39 years straight before the International Meridian Conference was held in Washington in 1884. When the prime meridian or Greenwich was established, calendars the world over had to be rectified, but not in the Philippines.

Going back to the 16th century, when Pigafetta, the chronicler and survivor of the Magellan expedition, returned to Europe, he had kept a day-to-day account of the voyage and wondered why they had "gained" a day more than the Spanish calendar. There was no idea of crossing time zones. The Philippine calendar had been reckoned in the 16th and 17th centuries using travel time from Mexico, but when the Suez Canal provided a more direct route in the 19th century, the discrepancy came about. So Claveria with the agreement of the archbishop of Manila, decreed that Dec. 30, 1844, a Monday, would be followed the next day by Jan. 1, 1845, a Wednesday. Thus, the Philippine calendar was already fixed before Greenwich was established in 1884.

The "Catalogo de apellidos" that accompanies the Claveria decree of 1849 is an interesting read. Not everyone will go through a phone directory today, but the "Catalogo" gives us the source of our surnames. It explains why we have Spanish surnames like Diaz, Fernandez, Perez, Guerrero and Ocampo. It also explains why so many people have names of saints like Agustin, Antonio, Domingo, Ignacio, Francisco, Bernardo, etc. The decree states that if people can prove that they have carried a certain saint's name for four generations, they could keep it unless it was something generic like De la Cruz or De los Santos.

We also see that certain names go all the way back to pre-colonial nobility. Thus, section 8 of the decree states that the surnames Lacandola, Mojica, Tupas and Raja Matanda recognized by royal approval, were only to be adopted by those who had rightful title to them.

It is the Philippine content of the "Catalogo," however, that makes it worth reading because it also shows us the source of indigenous surnames. The only problem is whether you would want to be named Baboy, Baca, Balimbing, Unggoy, Dilangbutiqui, Surot, Alboroto, Alalay, Bayag, Puqui, Utut or Ututan.

You ask, what's in a name? A lot.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Fairness and UP

THERE'S A LOT OF SHOUTING AND JUMPING THESE days on UP's campuses, as students and parents check out the results of UP's College Admissions Test (UPCAT).

Some 70,000 students took the UPCAT last August, but less than 10 percent have been admitted, based on their performance in UPCAT as well as their grades in high school, and certain equity factors such as socioeconomic status and geography.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Not all of those who passed will enter UP. The richer students have options, sometimes choosing to go to one of several exclusive private universities where they've also earned admission.

For students from middle- and low-income families, UP is what they and their parents have dreamed about, a way to get a top-rate education at relatively low tuition. Relatively. Last December, UP's Board of Regents approved an increase in tuition and miscellaneous fees, which could affect the decisions of some families about pushing through with a bright child in college.

STFAP

I have a strong feeling that many people are unaware of UP's Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program (STFAP), so I thought I'd share the details here, together with the new fees, to assure wavering parents that they do have options.

The new fee structure varies depending on the campus. Group I campuses—Diliman, Los Baños and Manila—will have higher tuition than Group II campuses—Baguio, Mindanao, San Fernando and Visayas (with campuses in Cebu and Iloilo and Tacloban).

A new STFAP has been drawn up with the new fees. Bracket A refers to those with annual family incomes of more than P1 million. Students from these families will pay the full-cost tuition, which comes to P1,500 a unit in Group I campuses and P1,000 in Group II campuses.

In Bracket B will be students whose annual family income ranges from P500,001 to P1,000,000. They will pay P1,000 a unit in Group I campuses and P600 in Group II campuses.

Bracket C students come from families with annual incomes of P135,001 to P500,000. They will pay P600 per unit in Group I campuses and P400 in Group II campuses.

Next are the Bracket D students, with family annual incomes of P80,001 to P135,000. They will pay P300 per unit in Group I campuses and P200 per unit in Group II.

Students from brackets A, B, C and D will all have to pay full miscellaneous and laboratory fees, which will be P2,000 per semester in Diliman and Los Baños; P1,950 in Manila; P1,405 in Baguio, San Fernando and the Visayas; and P1,640 in Mindanao.

Finally, there's Bracket E for students whose families earn less than P80,000 a year. They will not pay any tuition, miscellaneous or laboratory fees, and they will get a stipend of P12,000 per semester.

Equity

It's never easy working out a socialized tuition system. A group of faculty members that includes, among others, Dr. Maris Diokno and Dr. Cynthia Bautista, has expressed concern over Brackets C and D, wondering if this new system puts the middle class at a disadvantage. Their position paper did get me to do some calculations: a bracket D student on a 15-unit load would have to pay P4,500 in tuition, plus P2,000 in miscellaneous and laboratory fees for a total of P6,500 per semester or P13,000 a year, excluding the summer session. If his or her family earns about P135,000 a year, the upper limit of that bracket, the P13,000 would take up almost 10 percent of family income. Given how the middle class spends so much more than the rich, percentage-wise, for food and rent, even this subsidized tuition could become a serious burden, especially if the family has several children who are still attending school.

The continuing discussions and debates do show how concerned the university is about issues of fairness and equity. That was why opinions were divided over the tuition fee increase itself. My view is that the current fee structure, which dates back to 1989, has become unfair. What happened was that upper-class students were paying full fees that came to something like P20,000 a year. In effect, taxes squeezed out of the poor and the middle class were subsidizing the costs of giving the best education to the children of bank presidents and *hacenderos*.

I've written, passionately, about the need for more government support of education, and especially for a state university. But I should point out, too, that even in countries where the state is generous, and the main provider of college education, there is a streaming process which determines if students will be allowed to go on to college in the first place. Depending on their potentials, these eligible students will be streamed into different colleges, with only the brightest ending up in a national university.

UP faculty and students are reluctant to use language like "brightest" and "best" because it sounds so elitist, but rather than worry about political correctness, let's get real and look at who our "*iskolar ng bayan*" (people's scholars) are.

We need to do more to get students from the middle- and lower-income groups. If our fees scare off the few middle- and low-income families that dare to hope for a child in UP, we will end up with a state university that will exclude the poor.

Fair is fair. I would think that at UP, we could live with our reduced budgets if we saw government channeling more money to improve public education at the elementary and secondary education, eventually helping more of their graduates to make it into state universities, including UP.

And for those who do get into UP, we will have to find ways to keep them there and see them graduate. I worry again about the inequities. When upper middle-class students need money, they can work part-time in a call center to supplement their allowances. The poorer students are handicapped when they compete for such jobs, and have to resort to student loans, or undergraduate assistantships that pay P20 an hour, for a maximum of P2,000 a month. Graduate students get the grand amount of P4,000 a month.

There's always so much uncertainty for middle- and low-income students at UP. Incidental expenses turn out to be not so incidental; textbooks alone, for example, are enough to wipe out a budget. And just one family emergency—a catastrophic illness, a death, or even a delayed remittance from a parent working overseas—can force the student to take a leave of absence, some never to return. Each of these dropouts is a loss not just for the family but for the nation.

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Reming still claiming victims

THIS LETTER IS IN CONNECTION with the news item titled "Gov fears extreme poverty in Albay." (PDI, 1/11/2007) The governor noted that poverty would be the next crisis in Albay in the wake of Typhoon Reming. The governor of the province added that the government's effort is now toward the rehabilitation of Albay.

We of the Foodfirst Information and Action Network-Philippines (FIAN), an international human rights organization that advocates the right to food, believe that rehabilitation is an important matter for the victims of disasters. But more than that, the government should respond to the hunger situation that they are experiencing due to insufficient and inefficient food relief efforts.

We assert that the government, as a signatory to the International Covenant on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, should fulfill its obligation to protect the right of the people of Albay to adequate food and help them to enjoy that right.

FIAN has found out that the relief goods distributed in Albay were not enough for the victims and could not sustain them for a long period of time. There were barangays which received relief goods only once. In these barangays, each household (with four to six members) received only three kilograms of rice, some instant noodles and canned goods.

FIAN has also found out that relief goods in bulk or in big sacks did not reach isolated or far-flung areas of the province. The residents in those barangays said they have not received relief goods from the government or private institutions. They claim that they fill their hunger with the root crops they were able to save before the typhoon.

But these root crops are not too many to sustain them for a long period of time, until they can recover from Reming's devastation and engage again in their livelihood. Prices of food have gone up in the province by 50 percent to 160 percent. But due to loss of jobs and livelihood, people cannot afford these prices.

The typhoon left in its wake around 1,000 people dead. This figure will go up as more typhoon victims in Albay die a slow death from hunger. This is something that the government, as a signatory to the International Covenant on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, should worry about

—PAOLA NARTEA,
information and advocacy officer,
Foodfirst Information and Action
Network-Philippines (FIAN),
Unit 340, 26 Matalino St.,
Barangay Central, Quezon City

Let's preserve Baclaran's spiritual heritage

IN A NEWS ITEM TITLED "BACLaran to put up 'street mall' for vendors" (PDI, 1/12/07), Parañaque Mayor Florencio Bernabe was quoted as saying: "We are going to turn (Redemptorist Road) into a mall so vendors would have a permanent source of livelihood." The mayor was also reported to have said that the vendors, mostly residents of a Muslim neighborhood near Roxas Boulevard, could expect the mall to be finished by the middle of the year.

Our Redemptorist community here in Baclaran was shocked and appalled upon reading the report. I understand the good intention of the mayor to provide livelihood for the Muslim vendors. However, for such a big project like this, I don't know if he has consulted the other major sectors—business, residents of Baclaran, etc.—that have a direct interest in this major project and will be directly affected by it. To be sure, he has not consulted our community. As one of the major stakeholders of Baclaran, our interest is both historical and spiritual.

When the Redemptorists came to Baclaran in 1932, it was just an obscure, small fishing village of Manila. Never did our founding fathers imagine that someday, on this village would rise a shrine where thousands upon thousands of people from all over the country would flock day in and day out. Indeed, this phenomenon—a miracle, even—is not our work but God's and Mother Mary's. Baclaran became a household name and placed on the world map because of the warm affection and devotion of millions of Filipinos to Our Mother of Perpetual Help.

Lately, however, Baclaran has been at the forefront of the news not so much because of the "novena" but because of the anarchy, crime and terrible traffic caused by the clogging of the roads by vendors, uncollected trash which keep piling by the day, the lingering mistrust regarding transparency in the collection of fees, the proliferation of pornographic and abortion-inducing merchandise, loud speakers and audio components which create so much noise pollution, especially at night, as well as the never-ending vicious cycle of violence pitting MMDA operatives against vendors, which has resulted in several deaths and injuries.

We are also for the welfare of the vendors, especially the poorest among them who have no other means of livelihood. We support a permanent solution to the problem of the small vendors, but it should not be one that roofs and turns a national road, which is beyond the commerce of man, into a mall, jeopardizes the security and access of the devotees to the shrine and in effect desecrates the spiritual heritage and dignity of Baclaran.

We would like, therefore, to express our strong opposition to the continuous commercialization and desecration of Baclaran. We will work in solidarity with other sectors of Baclaran for a peaceful resolution of this issue.

—FR. JOSEPH O. ECHANO, CSsR,
rector, National Shrine of Our
Mother of Perpetual Help,
Baclaran, Parañaque City

Soldiers linked to murder plots

THE ASSASSINATION OF REP. Luis Bersamin Jr. is a grim reminder of the kind of politics we have in our country—one that is mired in violence and personal vendetta. I condole with the Bersamin family.

M/Sgt. Rufino Panday's participation in the assassination of the late congressman is quite disturbing. Another military sergeant was also responsible in the assassination of a hard-hitting journalist in Cotabato City. But he was not included in the criminal complaint. He was used as a state witness presumably due to the intervention of some influential people. The conformity of the prosecution strengthens one's suspicion. When the most guilty in the conspiracy of murder remains scot-free because he is used as a state witness, there is something wrong somewhere.

When I was still in the service, I received several death threats. I was tipped off, and the name of a military man appeared in the short list of plotters. But Judge Eugenio Valles of Nabunturan, Comval Province, was not equally lucky; he was murdered in broad daylight. And who has the temerity of committing the crime? One's guess is as good as mine. What is lamentable is the inefficiency of our law enforcers in tracking down the criminals. Five years have passed since Judge Valles was murdered.

It remains unsolved. The case of Bersamin is a challenge to our judicial system—a system that is usually flawed with technicalities and procedural lapses. Justice Lucas Bersamin should not be too timid to have the case of his brother solved, with Panday included in the charge sheet. The justice, a classmate of mine, is a bar topnotcher and brilliant law practitioner. I am proud of him.

—ERASTO D. SALCEDO,
former executive judge,
RTC, Tagum City

Why Philippines is at the bottom

I THINK THE PHILIPPINES IS the world champion when it comes to contaminated food, hospitalizing large numbers of people even at such august events as Asean meetings.

It is also the world's greatest killer of journalists and politicians. Probably, it takes the cake, too, for the most chaotic and bloody elections in the world. And if it isn't yet in possession of such honors, it will be manifest in the coming elections. (The Russians are avidly active in such crimes and soon may overtake the Philippines.)

I think the Philippines is also unrivalled in the number of people haling each other to court for the crime of libel. Such bent is really childish.

It is also evident that the Filipino is a hearty scofflaw when behind the wheel of a vehicle and completely inconsiderate of the rights and safety of others. And he seems to enjoy vehicles which belch vast clouds of black smoke and which look like they were assembled in World War I yet. And policemen are never seen where they are needed.

And recently we have been regaled with Malacañang's blustering attempts to reshape the election results by tossing out from office elected governors and mayors who belong to opposition parties, using hundreds of heavily armed police. That, I think, is a global first for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and a typical expression of the Filipino character. And the recalcitrance of retired military families to vacate the houses they occupy—houses which are only for active officers—is another one for the Guinness Book of World Records. Only in the Philippines.

In short, the Filipino has created a nation which is very near the bottom of the list of nations in terms of decent behavior and democratic values. It has lost its way because the childish Filipino lusts only for money and power and ignores his duty to his country. GMA is the ultimate seeker of power.

Character change? I have been preaching that solution for years but nobody listened. As I have said before, a new model of the Filipino is needed. The current generation and those that will follow are the only hope. But the large presence of religious schools do not help; these schools distract young people with pervasive false beliefs that in no way prepare the latter for the modern world.

Religion fills their heads with mythical nonsense and leaves no room for rational thinking. And in the end, the typical Filipino youth succumbs to the attitudes of his or her parents and to the rotten politics and selfishness that engulf the nation.

—ROBERT HANAN,
robhanan@robhanan.com

Credit card in 'senior citizen' purchase

IS THERE A LAW BANNING SEnior citizens from using a credit card in their purchase of medicines and other items covered by Republic Act 9257?

I am asking this question because, from my experience, drug stores and a big supermarket refuse to accept my Visa credit card every time I ask for a "senior citizen" discount. They allow me to enjoy the privilege only if I use cash. *Tama po ba sila?*

Does the law prohibit payment through credit card when we use the senior citizen discount card in making a purchase?

—CARLOS MANALASTAS,
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Sampaloc, Manila

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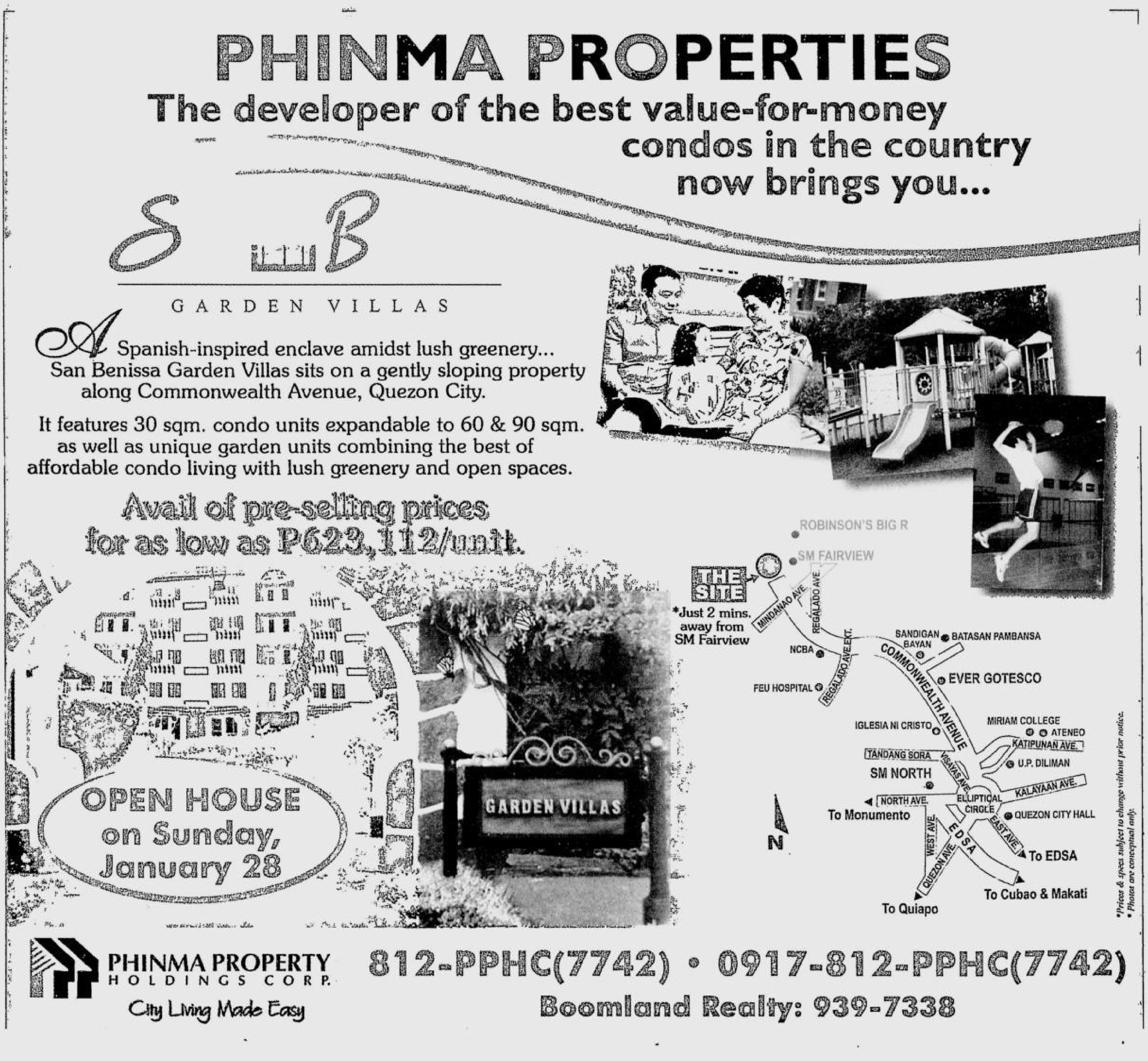
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SC reverses Ombudsman, orders graft raps vs Disini

From page A1

million, respectively, in violation of Republic Act No. 3019, the antigraft law.

The shares were in the name of Herdis, according to the complaint.

The stock certificates covering the transaction were among the documents recovered in Malacañang after Marcos fled into exile in Hawaii in February 1986.

Evidence disregarded

In its petition for certiorari, the PCGG lamented that the Ombudsman had disregarded other evidence it presented to support the graft complaint.

The PCGG said the antigraft body erred in holding that its complaint was supported only by a letter from Disini dated March 11, 1982, stating that the shares of VIMC and TEC, subsidiaries of Herdis Group, were turned over by him to Marcos.

The Supreme Court noted that Desierto ignored the affidavit executed by respondent Manahan as well as the VIMC and TEC stock certificates found in Malacañang after Marcos fled the country.

Manahan stated facts in his affidavit, which were based on personal knowledge, having held important positions in Herdis Group, the PCGG said.

"As one of the trusted men of private respondent Herminio Disini, he knew very well the latter's handwriting and signature. Hence, private respondents could not simply feign ignorance of the divestment plan, because all of them appear to have approved it," the PCGG said.

Thus, the Supreme Court noted that Desierto "has ignored vital evidence" in dismissing the case against Disini.

Disini's wife is a cousin of Imelda's and former governess to the Marcos couple's three children.

In just six years, Disini transformed a small cigarette filter manufacturing plant into a conglomerate empire of 33 enterprises with assets totaling about $200 million, Time magazine reported in 1978.

The capital accumulation continued until the Disini empire reached its peak with total assets of $1 billion, according to the book "Some are Smarter than Others."

Disini's firms manufactured textiles, explored for oil, ran charter flights and acquired the Philippine agency for Caterpillar construction equipment and a large block of shares in the Philippine subsidiary of Reynolds Metals Co.

Nuclear plant bribe

Disini, a reputed Marcos bagman, was believed to have received $17 million in bribes in the deal between National Power Corp. and Westinghouse for the construction of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

He has yet to face the music more than three decades after "fixing" the BNPP contract, according to former Sen. Rene Saguisag.

Westinghouse built the BNPP from 1974 to 1984 at a cost of $2.3 billion, nearly four times the initial bid of $600 million. The power plant has been mothballed.

Pacquiao gets Comelec . . .

From page A1

"I approved them myself. You can read from the papers what he's worth," Commissioner Nicodemo Ferrer, who is in charge of Comelec's gun ban committee, told reporters.

Ferrer said that Pacquiao obviously needed to protect himself and his family as well as the assets he had accumulated from his fights.

Having a "high-profile" personality and "living in a troubled area" are enough reasons for the Comelec to approve all the 20 applications filed by Pacquiao, Ferrer said.

Other personalities

The exempted guns would presumably be carried by Pacquiao and the bodyguards who accompany him and members of his family during his trips, or are stationed in their many houses.

The Comelec has imposed a nationwide gun ban to minimize violence in the run-up to the congressional and local elections in May.

Ferrer said that Pacquiao applied for the exemptions during his visit to the Comelec on Friday.

During that visit, Pacquiao met his one-time promoter, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., and appealed to the public to support the agency during the election period.

Ferrer said other personalities had already sought exemptions from the ban but he refused to identify them, citing security and privacy reasons.

17,000 applications

As of yesterday, Ferrer said the Comelec had received about 17,000 applications for exemptions, about 6,000 of which had been approved, mostly for policemen and military personnel.

Between 700 and 1,000 applications have been rejected, he said.

The applicants included about 1,000 politicians.

Ferrer said there was no need for applicants to be physically present when submitting their documents so long as they complied with the documentary requirements and accomplished their forms properly.

Mayor's son spurned

He said two representatives each from the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces were helping his committee evaluate the applications.

Only those with confirmed or justified "high-risk" security status will be given exemptions, he said.

Ferrer said a son of a Metro Manila mayor was refused an exemption because the only justification he gave was that he was a "councilor."

SC junks . . .

From page A1

cretion on the part of the Sandiganbayan when it declined to approve the proposed PCGG-GSIS Stock Purchase Agreement. For this purchase agreement involves sequestered San Miguel shares of stock the ownership of which is still under litigation in Civil Case No. 0033," said the decision penned by Justice Cancio Garcia.

The tribunal handed down the ruling on Monday, which upheld the Sandiganbayan order maintaining the sequestration of a block of San Miguel shares worth about P9 billion.

But the Supreme Court asked the antigraft court to settle the ownership issue.

On Sept. 9, 1994, the Sandiganbayan declined to lift the writ of sequestration over 14,519,996 San Miguel shares, which were transferred to the PCGG as arbitration fee in the compromise agreement executed by United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) and San Miguel in March 1990.

The Supreme Court said the Sandiganbayan First Division did not commit an error in disallowing the PCGG-GSIS stock purchase agreement because it involved sequestered San Miguel shares whose ownership was still being determined by the antigraft court.

Resale to GSIS members

Under the agreement, the block of shares sold to the GSIS shall be broken down into smaller units for resale to its members.

The agreement was opposed by San Miguel chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., Philippine Coconut Producers Federation (Cocofed) Inc., the late Zamboanga City Rep. Maria Clara Lobregat and the corporate secretary of San Miguel.

Cojuangco is claiming to be the owner of the 54,117,421 shares in UCPB and the 26,448 San Miguel shares covered by the purchase agreement.

For its part, Cocofed filed an opposition on behalf of coconut farmers, alleging that they are the beneficial owners of the particular block of San Miguel shares.

In the ruling, the court said "any ownership movement of these shares cannot be of any permanent character that will alter their being sequestered and as correctly observed by the Sandiganbayan in its resolution of March 18, 1992, as property in custodia legis [custody of the law]."

Tax on coconut farmers

A big block of San Miguel shares and other assets was acquired with funds from the tax that the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos imposed on coconut farmers between 1973 and 1982.

The Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF), a group of 14 holding companies owned by six oil mills that held the assets acquired by Marcos and his cronies with the use of the coco levy funds, was sequestered by the PCGG in 1986.

After the Supreme Court ruled in 2001 that the coco levy funds were prima facie public funds, and the Sandiganbayan declared in 2003 the levy funds were public funds held by government in trust for the country's coconut farmers, control of the CIIF and the 27-percent block of San Miguel shares went to the PCGG.

But until the decisions become final, the assets remain under sequestration.

The ownership of another 20-percent block of San Miguel shares controlled by Cojuangco is still under dispute.

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Blood demand bleeds Red Cross dry

DAVAO CITY—THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL RED Cross (PNRC) here said it can hardly cope with demand for blood after commercial blood banks were ordered to stop operations on Dec. 31.

The Department of Health (DOH) has shut down commercial blood banks because of fear of diseases being transmitted through contaminated blood.

Editha Mandaguia, PNRC chapter administrator, said the DOH has an existing blood bank facility here but it has not been operating because of lack of testing reagents.

She said this has made the Red Cross blood bank the sole source of blood supply here.

Mandaguia said they are now serving about 60 clients a day, or double the number of those availing themselves of the Red Cross service, when private blood banks were still operating.

Mandaguia said one problem they were faced with is the lack of eligible donors because a patient would normally require three units of blood. One unit is about 550 centilitres (cc).

She said the Red Cross Youth has a counterpart program on blood donation but this is still not enough to cope with demand.

Mandaguia said fewer companies have also organized mass blood donation activities this month compared with last year.

"We need more blood donors," she said.

Mandaguia said persons, whose ages are between 18-60 years old and weigh at least 45 kilograms, could donate blood once they pass medical tests required of potential donors.

Aside from supplying blood, the PNRC has also sent relief and other forms of assistance to victims of Supertyphoon Reming in Albay.

It was active also in various other sites of natural disasters, providing relief goods and medical help.

In some areas, especially in highly urbanized cities, poverty has driven many men to queue to donate blood in commercial blood banks that buy blood from donors willing to sell their blood.

But blood was not the only commodity that poor men were trying to make money out of. Some had been selling their kidneys amid reports that demand for kidneys was high, especially abroad where they fetch high prices. *Rizalene Acac, Inquirer Mindanao*

Foreign pests ravage town's 'atis' industry

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—A vicious species of mealybugs known to infest coconut trees and ornamental palms has caused a steep decline in the production of giant *atis* in Batangas and is now threatening to wipe out the multimillion-peso *atis* industry of the small agricultural town of Lobo, a scientist at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) said on Tuesday.

Dr. Ireneo Lit Jr., professor at the Department of Entomology in UPLB, said he and his fellow researchers were saddened and stunned by the enormity of the infestation wrought by the buff coconut mealybugs (BCMs) on *atis* trees during the survey they had in the area over the weekend.

Lit, with his wife Dr. Merdelyn Lit and researcher Ariel Larona, went to Lobo after its municipal officials and farmers' organizations sought their help in containing the pest.

He said BCM invasion was first reported in the area six years ago.

"The farmers in Lobo were really complaining because most of them rely on *atis* farming as their only source of livelihood. They said nothing will be left to them if the infestation continues," Lit told the INQUIRER.

Lobo, a fourth class municipality 150 km south of Metro Manila, is known for its large and sweet *atis*, and pristine white beaches.

Lit, an expert in the study of different species of mealybugs in the country, said BCMs could practically obliterate whole *atis* farms in Lobo if the plague is not contained as soon as possible.

He said as the El Niño season draws near, there is likelihood that the pest could invade other fruit-bearing trees, like guava and avocado, because mealybugs are dry season pests.

Based on initial estimates, Lit said *atis* farmers lost some P25.5 million in profits last year because of BCM infestation.

He said there are at least 170 *atis* farms in the town.

In a mobile phone interview, Ruth Plata, Lobo municipal agricultural officer, said 1,460 hectares in their 26 barangays are planted with *atis*.

Lit said just like in coconut trees, BCMs ravage *atis* trees by sucking the plant sap which eventually causes the leaves to become dry and wilt.

After feeding on the sap, the mealybugs will secrete simple sugars, called honeydew, which amasses on the leaves.

The accumulated honeydews will then cause the growth and development of sooty molds, a black-colored fungus that feeds on simple sugars produced by insects.

He said because the whole plant is covered with sooty molds, its temperature increases and photosynthesis, the plant's process of making food, is blocked. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

ICONS

JOE HARES-TANODRA/CONTRIBUTOR

The center of the Ati-Atihan celebration in Kalibo, Aklan, the Sto. Niño, gets a special place in Kalibo's streets. The town's celebration of the world famous festival was its 795th.

Shellfish ban hurts 8,000 fishermen

SORSOGON CITY—THE SANGguniang Lalawigan of Sorsogon yesterday declared four towns and a city under a state of calamity as a result of the continued ban on shellfish that has deprived thousands of fishermen around Sorsogon Bay of their livelihood.

Board Member Arze Glipo, chair of Sangguniang Panlalawigan Committee on Agriculture, said those placed under the state of calamity were the towns of Magallanes, Juban, Casiguran, Castilla and the city of Sorsogon.

Glipo said the declaration would now allow the provincial and municipal governments to use their calamity funds in providing help to the suffering fishermen.

Also yesterday, members of various fishermen organizations launched a rally in front of the provincial capitol to press the government to lift the shellfish ban imposed by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Gov. Raul Lee, who held a dialogue with the demonstrators, however said it was up to the BFAR to decide since it was a technical matter.

Lee promised the fishermen the provincial government will come up with alternative sources of livelihood.

The shellfish ban has been imposed by BFAR since October following laboratory test results showing very high red tide contamination in the Sorsogon Bay.

Serafin Lacdang, head of the Fishery section of the Provincial Agriculture Office, said some 8,000 fishermen have lost their livelihood as a result of the ban.

Municipal agriculturists have criticized BFAR for the delay in the release of the laboratory examination results on shellfish samples gathered from the bay. *Bobby Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Quezon DENR chief sacked for Sierra Madre logging

LUCENA CITY—THE CONTROversial chief of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Quezon was relieved from his post effective Thursday.

Felipe Ortiz, head of DENR-Quezon, was replaced by Herminigildo Jocson, former technical officer to the director of the DENR Parks and Wildlife Bureau.

A source from DENR-Quezon said Ortiz suffered the same fate as that of his predecessor Emrich Borja.

The two were both sacked due to alleged incompetence, particularly in the battle against widespread illegal logging in the Sierra Madre mountain ranges in northern Quezon, added the source.

"Just like Borja, Penro Ortiz's performance against illegal logging in Sierra Madre was also below par. Illegal loggers still prevail despite the active participation of NGOs on environment, local officials and Church officials in the war against forest destruction," said the informant who requested anonymity.

Jocson, however, denied that Ortiz has been sacked from his post. "He was just transferred to the DENR regional office," he said and refused to elaborate.

In October last year, the Tanggol Kalikasan-Southern Tagalog (TK-ST), a public interest environmental legal defense center, and the Church-based Task Force Sierra Madre (TFSM) called for Ortiz's removal to pave the way for a "competent leadership" in the government's war against the return of rampant illegal logging activities in the Sierra Madre in the Real-Infanta-General Nakar (Reina) area.

Same case

Early last year, Borja was also the subject of the same petition submitted to Malacañang by Church leaders, government officials and residents in the Reina area for his failure to curb illegal logging and attempts to blame Church-based non-government organizations as the culprits.

On Tuesday, the officials of Infanta, Real and General Nakar Sash and Furniture Cooperative (INREGNA-SFC) met with Jocson in his office here and appealed that their inventoried finished and semi-finished wood products, especially pieces of furniture ordered by the Department of Education, be given permission to be transported out of northern Quezon.

Jocson said he will first gather all records of past inventories before deciding whether to endorse the request to the DENR central office.

"All the papers should be authenticated," he added, citing his experience with altered inventory records. *Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

2 dead, 117 down in diarrhea outbreak

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—TWO PERSONS, INcluding a three-year-old girl, died while 117 others were hospitalized following a diarrhea outbreak in Loon, Bohol, according to Loon Mayor Cesar Tomas Lopez.

In an interview aired by a Cebu-based radio station, Lopez said the outbreak, which started Friday, swept through almost all of the town's 67 villages.

This prompted the Loon Sangguniang Panglunsod to declare a state of calamity in the town during Monday's session, he said.

The mayor, however, said he believed the outbreak has been put under control although a staffer at the mayor's office, in a later interview, said patients were still being brought to the town's hospital as of Monday noon.

Dr. Tito Miranda, municipal health officer of Loon, said the outbreak would soon be stopped since there were very few cases of diarrhea brought to the Loon hospital as of Tuesday. He also urged residents to boil water before drinking.

Dr. Rey Moses Cabagnot, provincial health officer, said he believed that the cause of the diarrhea was amoebiasis, a form of bacteria that could be found in water or food.

Cabagnot pointed at water as the more likely source of the bacteria.

Cabagnot said there were only 50 patients early last week, but the number of patients rose to 80 last Friday and then 117, as of Monday.

Lopez said majority of the diarrhea victims came from over 20 barangays in Loon.

Crowded hospitals

He identified one of the fatalities as Leah Lampara, 3, from Barangay Cogon Norte, while a staffer of the provincial hospital identified the other fatality as Paz Marzon, 57, from Barangay Basak. Doctors said gastroenteritis with severe dehydration was the cause of death of the two.

Lampara died on Friday at the Congressman Natalio Castillo Hospital in Loon while Marzon died Monday evening at the Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital in Tagbilaran City.

Lopez said over 100 patients were fed intravenously but they were in stable condition.

He also said people suffering from diarrhea went to different private and rural health clinics in Loon.

Some of the patients even came from the nearby town of Calape, he added.

A number of patients were brought to Tagbilaran after the Loon hospital could no longer accommodate them.

Most of the victims were children, he said. In fact, Lopez said there were victims who came from one elementary school.

The barangays with the most patients include Moto Sur, Moto Norte, Cogon Norte, Basak, Napo, Badbad Oriental, Badbad Occidental and eight barangays within Sandingan Island.

Dirty water

Lopez said he suspected that the diarrhea outbreak was caused by polluted water, which could have been contaminated by human or animal wastes following heavy rains that lasted for almost a month.

Sixty percent of the diarrhea-stricken patients get their water from the town's water system while the rest get water from springs and wells, he said.

While the water samples tested negative of any bacteria, the mayor said, four experts from the National Epidemiology Center in Manila have arrived in Loon to conduct further tests on their water sources.

The experts would investigate the cause of the diarrhea outbreak, Lopez said. The investigation would also cover the operations of water refilling stations in the town because some of the victims were using bottled water, he added.

Lopez said he had ordered all schools in the town to regulate the selling of ice candy, ice and juice to contain the outbreak.

He also urged barangay health workers and all barangay captains to immediately bring to the hospitals any person who have signs of diarrhea.

Lopez said the provincial government and the national government have promised to give financial assistance to all the victims.

But the town has to declare the state of calamity for it to use its calamity fund, which is 5 percent of the P30 million internal revenue allotment (IRA), for the purchase of medicines and bottles of dextrose.

Army says top NDF exec sent surrender feelers

TANDAG, SURIGAO DEL SUR—The spokesperson of the National Democratic Front (NDF) in Mindanao is trapped in a mountainous village in Tagbina town and has sent feelers for his surrender, the military said.

Col. Jose Vizcarra, 401st Infantry Brigade commander, said NDF leader Jorge Madlos, alias Ka Oris, is having a hard time slipping through the military cordon set up by elements of the 36th and 58th Infantry Battalions in Barangay Sta. Juana in Tagbina town.

Vizcarra said he expected his men to be able to get Madlos in the coming weeks after "food restriction" has been imposed on residents of the village.

He said Madlos had sent a message to a government officer to work out the details for his possible surrender.

Madlos, in his 60s, could hardly traverse the mountains as he has been suffering from an acute kidney ailment for years now, Vizcarra said.

He said that to ensure that Madlos and his men would not escape, the Army has been scouring the area on a 24-hour basis with the use of K-9 dogs and attack helicopters.

MADLOS

Since military operations started on Jan. 8, there have been seven clashes between New People's Army rebels and government troopers in Tagbina town. At least one rebel was killed while several others were wounded in the clashes, the military claimed.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to contact Madlos through his mobile phone. *Bert Pacate, Inquirer Mindanao*

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Will super region strategy get Filipinos out of poverty?

TONETTE T. OREJAS

THE DIOSDADO Macapagal International Airport in Clark Field.

By Tonette Orejas
Clark Special Economic Zone

The government convened an antipoverty summit at the Clark Special Economic Zone last week and projected three messages—it has the will and resources to win the war on hunger; the Luzon Urban Beltway (LUB) is the super region that will lubricate the economic takeoff; and this strategy will get millions of Filipinos out of poverty.

Are the poor convinced? Here's a sense from the ground.

FARMER JESUS LIM CAME out of the summit impressed but still cynical.

"It's a good program, but it has yet to be felt in the communities," he said after a battery of speakers talked on the gains of national economic reforms, what the Luzon Urban Beltway (LUB) seeks to do to bring the economy to unprecedented scales, and how the LUB could help lick poverty.

IN THE KNOW

THE LUZON Urban Beltway (LUB) is a super region made up of six of Central Luzon's seven provinces (Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales), Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) and Metro Manila.

The LUB hosts 40 million Filipinos and 30 percent of national labor force, and contributes 55 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP).

Lim has not abandoned his skepticism even after he heard President Macapagal-Arroyo present a hunger-mitigating program. She called it the "most important landmark" of her administration's poverty reduction efforts.

"Will it really reach us?" asked Lim, chair of the Association of Chairpersons of Agrarian Reform Communities in Bulacan.

But he agreed with Ms Arroyo on one point: The best measure of success is "when no one goes hungry anymore."

It also means that those who have very little means to survive on, like the farmers, can have the resources to rise in life.

In the agrarian reform program, for instance, Lim said the distribution of lands did not immediately guarantee food production because of lack of facilities such as roads and irrigation canals, capital to support planting technology, and marketing assistance. Land conversion, of course, takes away farms for other uses, he said.

Not one-shot deal

Fighting poverty, he said, was "not a one-shot deal."

Lim said several agencies compound the hardships by unilaterally changing terms in loan contracts.

Not wanting the government to fail this time, he suggested an approach to eliminate poverty: "I hope our officials would do it this way: Bottom-up [approach], not like fitting us with ready-to-wear clothes but tailor-made."

Muslim leader Datu Amerol-Gulam Ambiong harbors fear.

"All the good things I heard here might all end up in this assembly and nothing good would come out of this gathering," said Ambiong, 56, chair of the National Muslim Peace and Order Council.

He said the antipoverty measures that came along with the implementation of the LUB's 15 "mega infrastructures" are especially important because the 1.2 million Muslims in Luzon—more than half a million concentrated in Metro Manila alone—are people displaced by war and poverty in Mindanao.

"When you're displaced, you come to an area bringing almost nothing. In the case of our Muslim brothers, we got no land to start anew. We end up being squatters. Most of us rely on skills selling merchandise on streets," he said.

Peace talks

According to him, peace negotiation is a key solution to displaced Muslims. It could usher in their return to their homeland and start anew there, he said.

Urban poor leader Evangeline Palliones, 61, sees an irony at the summit.

As it came to a close, a member of her group, the Sagip Tahanan at Kabuhayan ng Pilipinas Inc., was being ejected from her house in San Pedro, Laguna. She was angry because, again, it was the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp., not the court, which issued the ejection order.

If the government was really dead serious about the antipoverty campaign, Palliones said Vice President Noli de Castro, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, should work to stop the foreclosure and sale of foreclosed homes.

In her case, the housing problem came doubly serious.

After her house in Tondo, Manila, was demolished in 1988, she agreed to transfer to a government lot in Laguna. She had not been able to pay the loan for the unit because much of the income went to the schooling of her six children since there was no public school near the area.

"The problem with the government's housing program is that the scheme is not based on the capacity of poor families to pay," she said. It is often the lament of many in her group's 60,000 members, she added.

Same thing

For health worker Fe Manapat, the antipoverty program was predictably similar to what had been done in the past. "It's the same thing over and over again," Manapat, of WomanHealth, observed.

What is needed now is for the government to be transparent and to allow monitoring of its implementation, especially health programs, she said.

"On the ground, some supposedly regular programs, like immunization, are not held on the frequency they were scheduled. Instead of every quarter, it is done once or twice a year because of lack of budget," she said.

Workshop results showed no specific targets as to priority communities or how many percent of poor shall be reached and helped. (Nationwide, the National Anti-Poverty Commission targets to reduce poverty incidence to 17 percent from 34 percent by 2010).

The workshops identified and planned for "specific, high-impact antipoverty projects." The list is long, ranging from microfinance, livelihood and jobs, asset reforms in agriculture, indigenous domains and urban areas to social services and social protection.

Leftists, who snubbed the summit, anticipate a host of problems, not comfort. The entry of investments, drawn by the P200-billion infrastructures, could mean cheaper wages and fewer areas for agriculture, fisheries and homes.

Corruption

Corruption of public funds in the LUB projects is seen as well.

Secretary Edgardo Pamintuan, the man overseeing the coordinating body for the LUB, knows that the strategy faces skepticism.

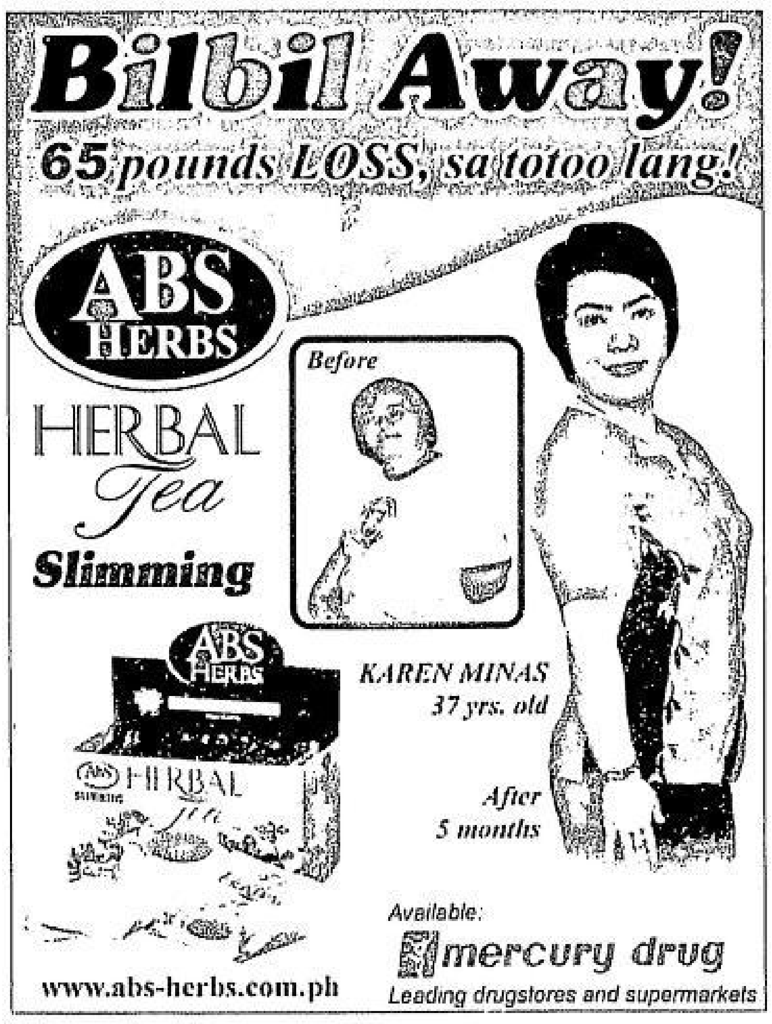
"We need more time for these programs to be realized. Many, especially ordinary citizens, are asking: 'Where is the economic prosperity that you have promised? Where is development? Can we eat all of these data?'" he said at the summit opening.

In saying that prosperity would indeed come, Pamintuan echoed Ms Arroyo's remarks.

"Confidence (in the economy)," the President said, was "fueled by the unity of the people, spirit of enterprise and the force of regional integration."

WORKERS put the finishing touches on a ditch of the North Luzon Expressway linking Manila and the northern Philippines.

AFP



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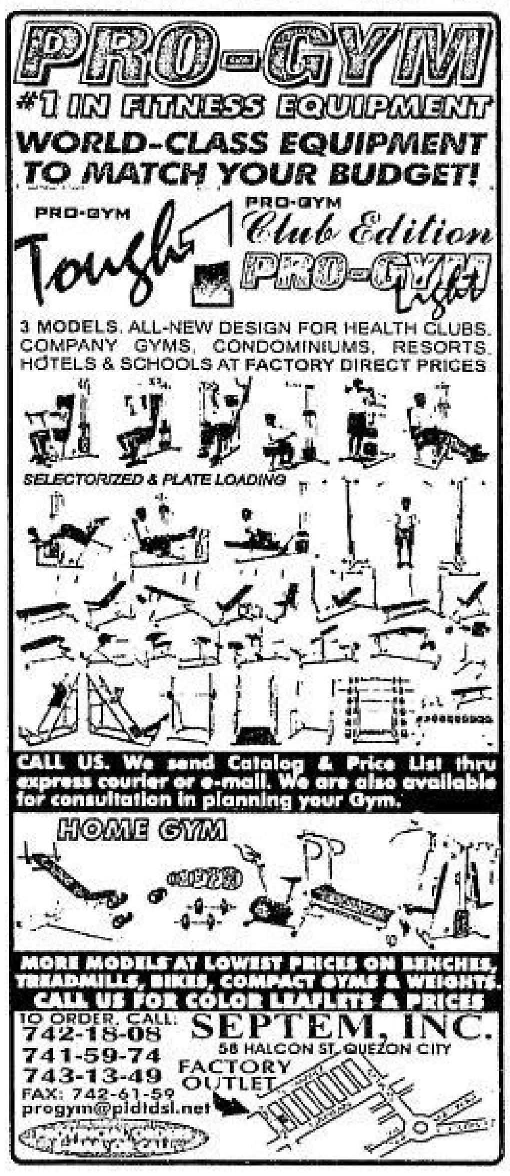

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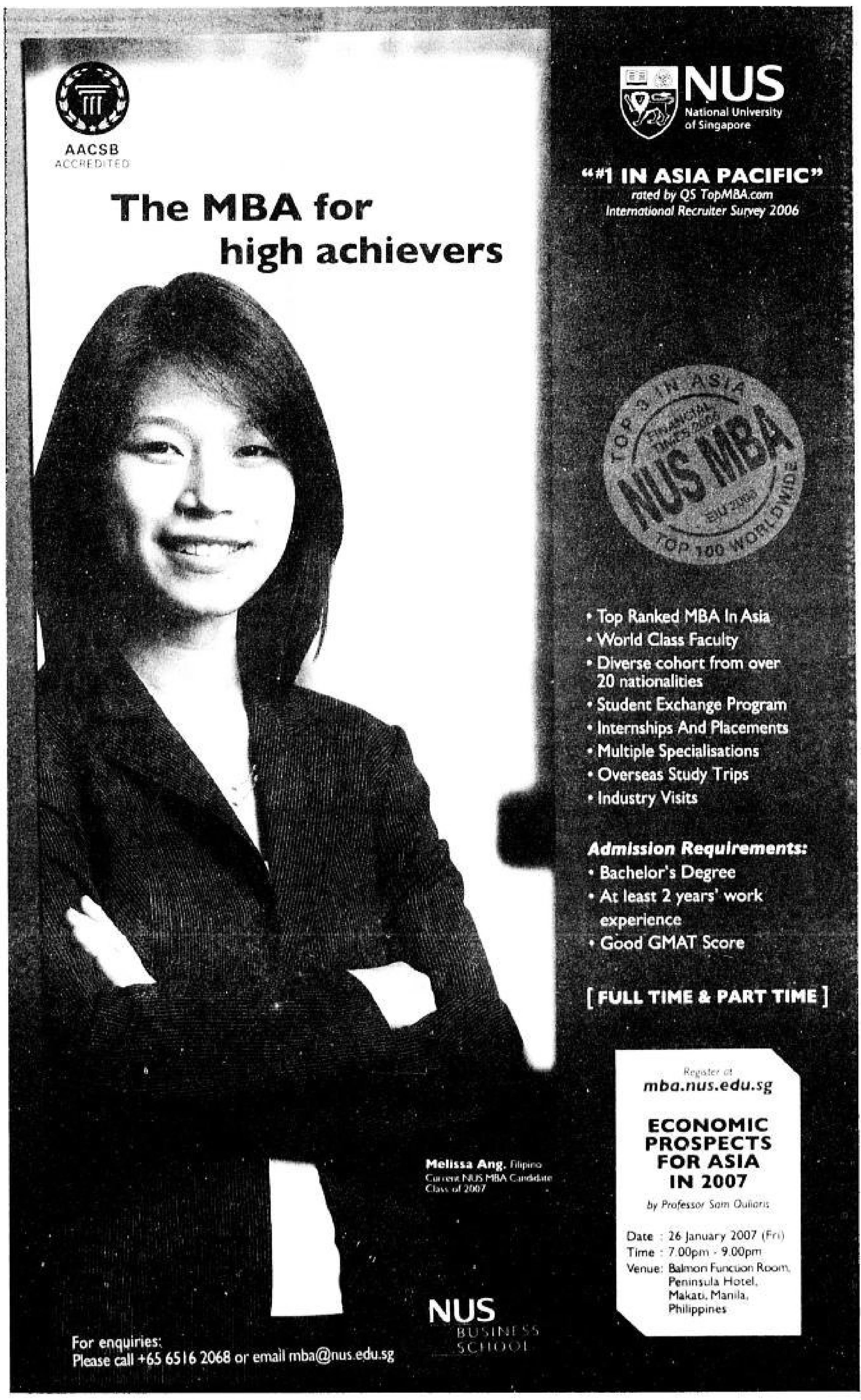

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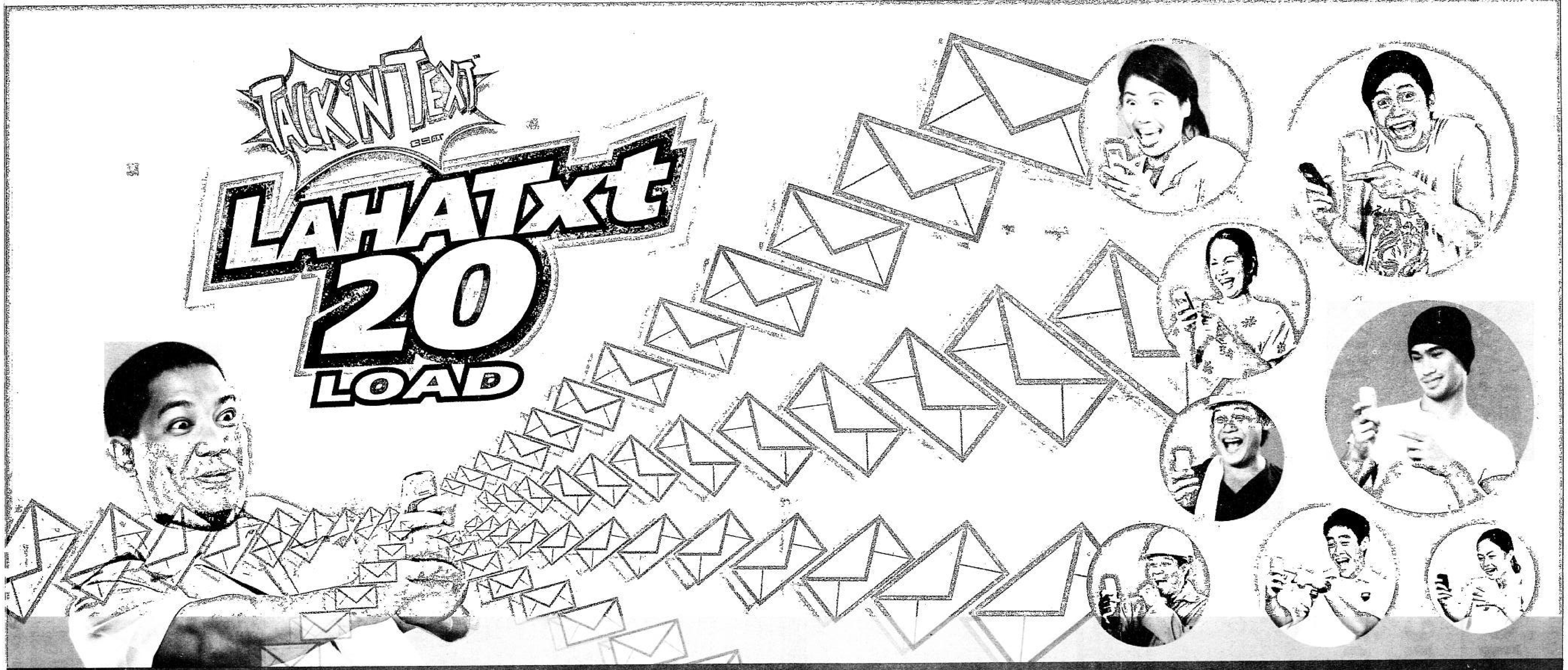

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Workers serve notice to LRTA: Pay up

But railway firm disagrees with NLRC order giving strikers ₱208M

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION has ordered the Light Rail Transit Authority and its subsidiary, Metro Transit Organization Inc., to pay over P208 million in back wages and benefits to 211 workers who were dismissed in 2000 after they went on strike.

On top of the back wages, the LRTA and Metro will also shoulder almost P21 million in lawyers' fees.

In an order dated Jan. 12, the NLRC directed its sheriff to accompany the claimants to the defendants' corporate counsel and collect the claims of 211 dismissed workers of the Light Rail Transit Line 1 which runs from Baclaran to Monumento.

The workers were fired in 2000 after they went on strike to protest a deadlock in negotiations over the collective bargaining agreement. The strike paralyzed operations of the LRT Line 1 for several days.

The NLRC order was issued after the Supreme Court, in a 15-page consolidated decision, affirmed the ruling of the Court of Appeals that Metro was liable for illegally dismissing the workers and should pay them their back wages and other benefits.

Some of the claimants, who are members of the Pinag-isang Lakas ng Manggagawa ng LRT (Piglas), National Federation of Workers Union (NFWU), and Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), held a rally in front of the LRTA com-

WORKERS/A18

SAMMY Malunes, leader of a group of former Light Rail Transit Line 1 workers, shows documents allegedly authorizing him and other employees who were dismissed in 2000, to collect over P208 million in back wages and benefits. REM ZAMORA

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Mayor orders temporary closure of Montalban dump

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Tarra V. Quismundo

TEN OF METRO MANILA'S 17 towns and cities, including Cainta and San Mateo in Rizal province, will have to dump their garbage elsewhere following the temporary closure of the 14-hectare Montalban Solid Waste Disposal Facility starting yesterday.

The decision to shut down the sanitary landfill was made by Rodriguez town Mayor Pedro Cuerpo after a dispute with the Rizal provincial government over supervision of the facility.

According to Cuerpo, the landfill will remain closed "until issues have been resolved." Only garbage from his town will be dumped in the facility in the meantime, he added.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, meanwhile, said it has started diverting garbage collected from Metro Manila to a landfill somewhere in northern part of the metropolis.

"We have diverted the garbage to a transfer station in Pier 8 in Manila, which is then brought by barge to a sanitary landfill off Manila Bay, not too far from the Malabon-Navotas area," MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno told the INQUIRER by phone yesterday.

He added that the agency has asked the operator of a landfill in Clark Field, Pampanga "to be ready to take in Metro Manila's garbage" in case some problems crop up.

Nacianceno said agency officials led by MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando were set to meet last night with Cuerpo and officials of Rizal province to discuss their "internal dispute."

The provincial government claims it has taken over supervision of the facility since November but this was denied by Cuerpo.

Rizal legal officer Edgardo Samson told the INQUIRER that the provincial government took over the facility "to avert a garbage crisis" following the refusal of the Rodriguez government to renew its contract with the private contractor which operated the sanitary landfill.

He added that the provincial government also had to step in to rehabilitate the facility after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources reported that it was operating in violation of certain environmental rules.

But Cuerpo said that even without the provincial government, his municipality could implement the rehabilitation of the landfill. The dispute between the two local governments was further aggravated by the methane gas extraction project Cuerpo had authorized in the facility which the provincial government has opposed.

Cuerpo earlier entered into an agreement with a private firm for an exploration project on "methane gas power generation."

According to Samson, the agreement was "invalid" since agreements for such projects "should pass through the Sangguniang Panlalawigan."

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UNIVERSITY of the Philippines students cover the Oblation statue on the Diliman, Quezon City, campus with a black cloth to symbolize their protest against the 300-percent tuition increase. RAFFY LERMA

Illegal electric meters found near Malacañang

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Joba A. Botana, *Contributor*

OPERATIVES OF THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation (NBI) arrested three men allegedly responsible for the installation of illegal electric meters near a Malacañang Palace gate last week.

The suspects were identified as Fernando Lopez, Romeo Puray and Alvino Balajadia, all residents of Sta. Cruz, Manila.

An investigation conducted by the NBI Interpol Division headed by head agent Claro de Casto Jr. showed that an informant had called the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) and reported the presence of illegally installed electric meters in the San Miguel area, a few meters away from the east gate of Malacañang Palace.

Confiscated

The Meralco Power Metering Security Office (PMSO) immediately sent a team to the area to confirm the information.

The team subsequently confiscated two electric meters on Arias and Bacastigue Streets that were later found to have been stolen from Pilar and Abad Santos Streets in Tondo.

According to NBI Interpol special investigator James Calleja, the informant again reported to the PMSO that suspects Lopez, Puray and Balajadia were planning to replace the confiscated meters in San Miguel for a fee.

Officials of the PMSO then sought the assistance of NBI operatives in catching the suspects.

NBI agents arrested the trio in the act of installing the illegal meters near Malacañang last Jan. 20.

Drive

A squad composed of NBI agents and members of the Philippine Marine and Presidential Security Group from Malacañang Palace then conducted a saturation drive in San Miguel where they found several illegally installed meters on Arias, Barcastigue, N. Padilla and Aguada Streets.

Calleja said the NBI would subpoena the owners of the houses close to where the illegally installed meters were found.

The three suspects now face charges for violation of Republic Act 7832 or the "Anti-Electricity and Electric Transmission Lines/Materials Pilferage Act of 1994."

DID YOU KNOW

EXACTLY 17 years ago, then President Corazon Aquino signed Republic Act No. 6847 creating the Philippine Sports Commission on Jan. 24, 1990. The PSC aims to implement a national sports program, give all sectors an opportunity to participate in sports and support athletes for high level competitions. It holds office at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex on Vito Cruz Street, Manila.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Antituition hike UP studes solicit aid from freshmen

By DJ Yap

STUDENTS OPPOSED TO THE impending tuition increase at the state-run University of the Philippines are counting on possible reinforcements in their campaign: Incoming freshmen.

With the release of the UP College Admission Test results on Monday, student groups called on the "new recruits" to join efforts to derail a resolution approving a three-fold raise in tuition at the university.

"We're staging propaganda actions encouraging incoming freshmen to participate in anti-tuition increase rallies," student regent Raffy Jones Sanchez said.

"After all, they will be the ones most affected by the tuition increase," he told the INQUIRER during a rally yesterday at the Palma Hall lobby on the UP Diliman campus.

Last December, the UP Board of Regents (BOR) approved university president Emerlinda Roman's recommendation to impose a 300-percent hike in tuition amid strong objections from student and faculty organizations.

The new fees will apply to incoming freshmen who will enroll in June. The UP's tuition rates were last adjusted in 1989.

On Monday, Sanchez filed a motion "enjoining the board to withdraw its approval of the tuition increase on the ground that debates were not exhausted and the points raised by the students were not answered."

University Student Council chair Juan Paolo Alfonso said the motion, along with a similar motion submitted by faculty regent Roland Simbulan, would be taken up by the BOR in its Jan. 26 meeting at UP Pampanga.

"Theoretically, it's still possible to reverse the decision if the BOR grants the motions," he added. Both officials were hopeful they would be able to mobilize a big crowd during a rally scheduled on Jan. 26.

With the impending increase, the cost of an academic unit shall be raised from P300 to P1,000 on the Diliman, Manila and Los Baños campuses, and from P200 to P600 on the Baguio, Visayas and Mindanao campuses.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
JANG TRAVEL AND TOURS 23B 3/F, Legaspi Tower 30, Roxas Blvd. cor. Vito Cruz, Malate, Manila	Youn Seok Jang	Manager
WEI YIENG GARMENTS (MANILA) COMPANY, INC. Km. 23 West Service Road, South Super Highway, Cupang, Muntinlupa City	Shu-Min Lee	General Manager
STANDARD CHARTERED BANK 6788 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Supratim Pandey	Value Center General Manager for Credit Cards and Personal Loan
U HUAT INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL INC. 1034 G. Masangkay St., Binondo, Manila	Jie Liu	Executive Marketing Sales
BORACAY SHANGRI-LA HOTEL & RESORT INC. c/o Makati Shangri-la Hotel, Ayala cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Andre Kretschmann	General Manager
WYETH PHILIPPINES, INC. 2236 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Carolina Cbrino	Finance Director
SEH KHAY INTERTRADE ENTERPRISE 3/F, Zeta Bldg., 191 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Chin-Feng Wang	Production Manager
SEH KHAY INTERTRADE ENTERPRISE 3/F, Zeta Bldg., 191 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Tai-Hsiang Wang	Technical Supervisor
FIRST SKY BUILDERS TRADING CORPORATION #3 Aurora Boulevard, Santol, Quezon City	Zhiming Liao	General Manager
MONDU INTERIOR SUPPLY CORPORATION 201 Dalisay St., Bacood, Sta. Mesa, Manila	Jintao Mu	General Manager
CHAE YOGA MEDITATION SERVICES INC. Unit 1204, City & Land Mega Plaza, Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Man Sang Mo	Operation Manager
HANA & CHOI BUSINESS VENTURES CORPORATION Lot 30, Blk. 7, SAV7, Pulang Lupa 2, Las Piñas City	Gi Ho Choi	General Manager
MG EXEO NETWORK, INC. 7/F, DPC Place, 2322 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Yutaka Funaki	President
CHINA OCEANIS PHILIPPINES INC. The Boardwalk, Quirino Grand Stand, Luneta Park, Ermita, Manila	Yuhui Lin	Head, Curatorial Services
GREAT CHINA RESOURCES CORPORATION 2962 Jose Abad Santos St., Tondo, Manila	Jian Yin	Vice President for Operation
MAKATI SHANGRI-LA MANILA Ayala Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Gregory Allan Dogan	General Manager
PEOPLESUPPORT (PHILIPPINES) INC. People Support Center, Ayala Ave., cor. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Paul D. Ramirez, Jr.	Team Supervisor
PEOPLESUPPORT (PHILIPPINES) INC. People Support Center, Ayala Ave., cor. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Shawn Lauchlin Maclean	Program Director
PEOPLESUPPORT (PHILIPPINES) INC. People Support Center, Ayala Ave., cor. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Cecil Joseph Pebin Chandrapaul	Program Director
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILIPPINES INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Mingli Tan	Technical Support Consultant

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI-Jan. 24, 2007)

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
Kagawaran ng Tanggulang Pambansa
Department of National Defense

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(PROCUREMENT OF AFP DEFENSE EQUIPMENT)

1. The Department of National Defense (Armed Forces of the Philippines), through the *AFP Modernization Program Act Trust Fund* and the *Department of Energy-Transferred Fund*, intends to apply the sum of ***SEVEN HUNDRED THIRTY ONE MILLION NINE HUNDRED EIGHT THOUSAND PESOS (PhP731,908,000.00)*** being the total *Approved Budget for the Contract* (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Acquisition of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Defense Equipment.

2. The DND/AFP now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the bidding of the various AFP defense equipment, with the respective cost of bidding documents per project, as follows:

NAME OF PROJECT	APPROVED BUDGET OF THE CONTRACT	Cost of Bidding Document
1. PA/PAF Night Fighting System (NFS) Project	Php 266.46M	Php 50,000.00
2. PN/PMC Night Fighting System (NFS) Project	321.448M	50,000.00
3. PA Upgraded M113 APC Project	144M	25,000.00
TOTAL	Php 731.908M	

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the *Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A* (IRR-A) of *Republic Act No. 9184* (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "*Government Procurement Reform Act*," and is open to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in *Section II* of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the *Lowest Calculated Bid* (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the *Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder* (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *DND Bids and Awards Committee* (DND BAC) *Secretariat* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address specified below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount specified above. The method of payment will be in cash or thru cashier's check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. The DND BAC will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **January 30, 2007 at 9:00 A.M.**, DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **February 14, 2007 at 9:00 A.M.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any form and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A. Late bids shall not be accepted.

8. Bid opening shall be on **February 14, 2007 at 9:00 A.M.** and DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

9. Only bids from manufacturers or their representative of the aforementioned system/equipment will be entertained

10. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or prospective bidders who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the DND BAC, through the DND BAC Secretariat, at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the procurement of the projects they wish to participate in, pursuant to *DND BAC Cir 01-2005* dated 12 May 2005.

11. The DND/AFP reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Contact Person: Ms. Amelia M. Garrero
DND BAC Secretariat
1/F DND Building, Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo
Quezon City, Philippines 1110
Tel. No : (632) 911-6001 local 8414
Telefax No : (632) 421-3531
Email : bacsecretariat@dnd.gov.ph
Website : www.dnd.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **ASEC ROBERTO G NUQUI**
Chairman, DND BAC

(PDI–Jan. 24, 2007)

Workers serve notice to LRTA . . .

From page A17

pound in Pasay City yesterday with the writ of execution issued by labor arbiter Elias Salinas.

Later in the day, LRTA corporate legal counsel Gregorio Perez said the company was not in favor of the NLRC order. He cited a Supreme Court order last year in which it said that the NLRC or any labor arbiter cannot issue any order regarding the LRTA.

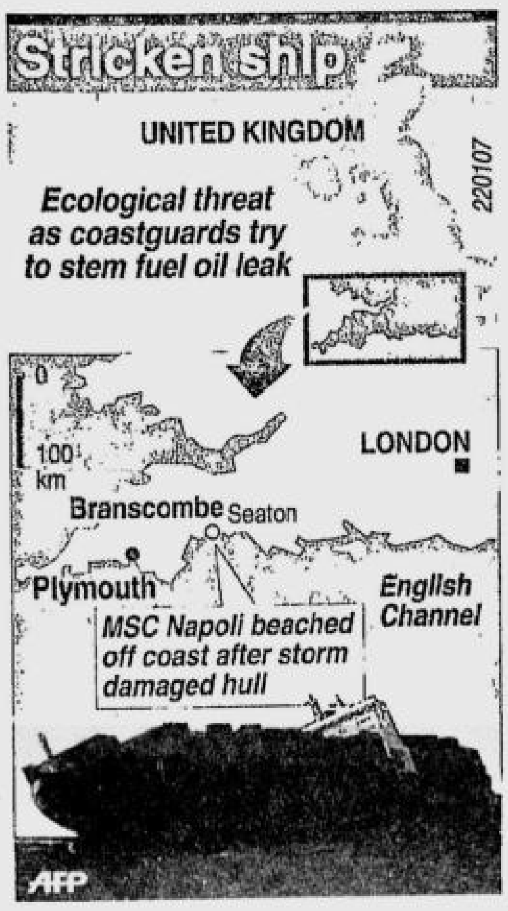
A total of 232 dismissed workers filed the suit against the LRTA and Metro in July 2000. The LRTA was headed then by Teodoro Cruz Jr. while Jose Cortez Jr. was Metro chair.

According to Ronald Decosco and other Piglas members, there were originally 1,300 members who sought a collective bargaining agreement when the LRTA-Metro management said the rail authority was up for privatization. Of the total, more than 900 workers joined the strike following the breakdown in negotiations. Only 232 workers, however, filed a suit against the LRTA and Metro but the NLRC order covers only 211 employees as the remainder filed individual complaints which still have to be acted on.

In 2004, the NLRC decided in the workers' favor but the LRTA appealed the decision after 60 days. In its decision last year, the High Tribunal said the workers should be compensated for illegal dismissal although it pointed out that they cannot be considered employees of LRTA because they were hired by Metro, its subsidiary.

The LRTA, which constructed the country's first light rail transit system in the metropolis, had entered into a 10-year agreement with Metro in 1984 for the management and operation of the LRT Line 1. The agreement expired in 1994. It was renewed initially on a yearly basis and eventually, on a monthly basis.

Metro entered into CBA negotiations with employees in March 1995 and in 1998. Disagreements later resulted in a dispute which led to a strike.


Stricken ship
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100 km
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Seaton
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MSC Napoli beached off coast after storm damaged hull
AFP

Twin car bombs kill 100 in Iraq

BAGHDAD—BOMBS RIPPED THROUGH markets killing at least 100 people on Monday as al-Qaida claimed it shot down an American helicopter and US and Iraqi forces readied an offensive against militias in Baghdad.

Another 15 people died in other attacks in Iraq.

Two car bombs exploded just after midday at the crowded Haraj market in the heart of Baghdad, killing 88 Iraqis, security officials said.

A few hours later, mortar fire and a roadside bomb killed 12 people at a market in the town of Khalis, northeast of Baghdad.

And late in the day, mortar fire killed six pilgrims as they marched in a procession south of Baghdad to commemorate the Shiite mourning period of Ashura.

Meanwhile, al-Qaida claimed it shot down a US helicopter on Saturday, after a US official said it might have been hit by a shoulder-fired missile.

In Baghdad, the Haraj bombs exploded seconds apart, sending twin columns of thick smoke billowing above the Bab al-Sharki district on the east bank of the Tigris river.

It was the worst attack in the capital this year.

Hospital and security sources put the casualty toll at 88 dead and 160 wounded in the Haraj market, which is usually filled with traders selling used electronic goods, watches, old clothing and medicines.

"There were so many victims they were piled up on wooden market carts, the wounded on top of the dead, and hauled to ambulances and police vehicles," an AFP photographer at the site said.

Police prevented him from recording images of the slaughter.

"Improvised rescue workers made their way through the carnage amid the cries of those wounded," he added.

At the nearby Al-Kindi hospital, some of the victims' relatives squatted down, holding their heads in grief, while others cried before bodies lined up on the ground and covered with light blue plastic sheets.

But the deadly mayhem did not stop there.

The Khalis bomb was placed in a vegetable cart and tore through a crowd of shoppers in the volatile Diyala province, Lt. Ahmad Mohammed said.

In Suwayra, south of Baghdad, Shiite pilgrims were marching in an Ashura procession when two mortar rounds exploded, killing three women, two men and a baby, a security source said. Six others were wounded.

Ashura, which commemorates the seventh-century slaying of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson Imam Hussein in Karbala, has been marred in recent years by Sunni extremist attacks that have killed scores of people.

Elsewhere in Baghdad and Baquba, another nine people died in mortar and gun attacks, and police recovered 27 corpses of men shot to death execution-style, a security official said.

Insurgents have stepped up attacks as Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and US authorities put in place a new security plan to secure the capital.

The bombings also came as the US military continued to take heavy casualties, with 47 personnel killed since the start of the month.

Twenty-five US troops died on Saturday alone, including 12 in a helicopter crash, in one of the highest single-day death tolls since the US-led invasion of March 2003.

The Iraqi branch of terror network al-Qaida claimed it had brought the Black Hawk down, but only after a US defense official said it might have been hit with a shoulder-fired missile.

Under the new security plan, 3,200 extra US troops have so far landed in Baghdad where raging sectarian conflict has left tens of thousands of people dead. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Top Somali Islamist yields

NAIROBI—A senior leader in Somalia's Islamist movement wanted by the country's transitional government has surrendered to authorities in neighboring Kenya, officials and diplomats said Monday. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, head of the executive arm of the Supreme Islamic Council of Somalia (SICS), presented himself to Kenyan officials at the weekend and was being held in Nairobi, they said. "Sharif has surrendered to Kenyan authorities," Somali deputy prime minister Hussein Aidid told AFP. *AFP*

Canadian pig farmer admits killing 49

WESTMINSTER, CANADA—A Canadian pig farmer on trial Monday told a cop he had murdered 49 people and split and froze two of the victims' heads, a prosecutor said. Prosecutor Derrill Prevett told the court on the first day of the trial of Robert William Pickton that while in jail following his arrest Pickton indicated he had killed 49 people. "I was going to do one more to make an even 50," he said, according to Prevett. The Vancouver trial opened Monday with the prosecution offering gruesome details of how horrified police found two women's heads stored in freezers before they arrested Pickton in 2002. *AFP*

Guinea police kill 23

CONAKRY—Police shot dead 23 protesters across Guinea on Monday, raising to 33 the death toll in almost two weeks of a general strike and demonstrations against President Lansana Conte's rule, medical and union officials said. At least 169 have been recorded injured across the country. The death toll makes Monday the bloodiest day in the strike that started on Jan. 10 at the call of labor unions. With 18 dead and 140 wounded, the capital Conakry recorded the largest number of deaths. *AFP*

Nokor nuke talks in February

BEIJING—Six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program could resume in February, Russia's chief negotiator said on Monday, with a senior US envoy seeing potential for progress. The sense of urgency in the six-party talks has grown since the reclusive North defied international warnings in October with its first nuclear test, triggering UN sanctions. Russian negotiator Alexander Losyukov, who is also a deputy foreign minister, said Pyongyang was optimistic about resuming the negotiations after a meeting in Berlin last week with US officials, the Interfax news agency reported. *Reuters*

Deceptive Internet affair turns fatal

BUFFALO, NEW YORK—HE WAS an 18-year-old Marine headed to war.

She was an attractive young woman sending him off with pictures and lingerie.

Or so each one thought.

In reality, they were two middle-aged people carrying on an Internet fantasy based on seemingly harmless lies.

When a truthful 22-year-old was drawn in, authorities say, their cyber escape turned deadly.

"When you're on the Internet talking, you haven't got a clue who that is on the other end," Sheriff's Lt. Ron Kenyon said. "You don't have a clue."

When Brian Barrett was shot to death Sept. 15 outside the factory where he worked to help pay for college, investigators and his family were stumped.

Barrett, 22, was an aspiring teacher, an accomplished high school athlete who had coached Little League baseball all summer and helped his father coach soccer. Those who knew the Buffalo State College student described him as quiet and unassuming.

He had clearly been targeted. Barrett was shot three times at close range in the neck and left arm after climbing into his truck about 10 p.m. at the end of a shift at Dynabrade Corp. in Clarence, 32 km outside of Buffalo. His body was found two days later in his pickup truck in an isolated part of the company parking lot.

On Nov. 27, Barrett's 47-year-old coworker and friend, Thomas Montgomery, was charged with Barrett's murder. The motive, investigators said, was jealousy over Barrett's budding Internet relationship with the same 18-year-old woman Montgomery had been wooing since the previous year.

What neither man knew was that the woman was really a 40-something West Virginia mother using her daughter's identity to attract Internet suitors. Cyberspace, it appeared, was enough for her, and it was a near certainty she would never have met either man.

When Montgomery began chatting with the woman in 2005, the former Marine portrayed himself as perhaps a previous version of himself—a young Marine preparing for deployment to Iraq, Assistant District Attorney Ken Case said.

For a time, they communicated strictly through chat rooms and e-mail.

Then the woman began sending gifts to Montgomery's home, Case said. Pictures of the woman's daughter, lingerie and a set of custom-made dog tags arrived at the pale yellow suburban house that Montgomery shared with his wife and two teenage children.

Montgomery's wife intercepted one of the packages, Case said. She wrote back to the woman at the return address, and included a family portrait to make her point.

"As you can see, Tom's not 18," Case said she wrote. "He's married and he's a father of two. He's 47 and I'm his wife." And, believing she was writing to an 18-year-old: "You've obviously been fooled." *AP*

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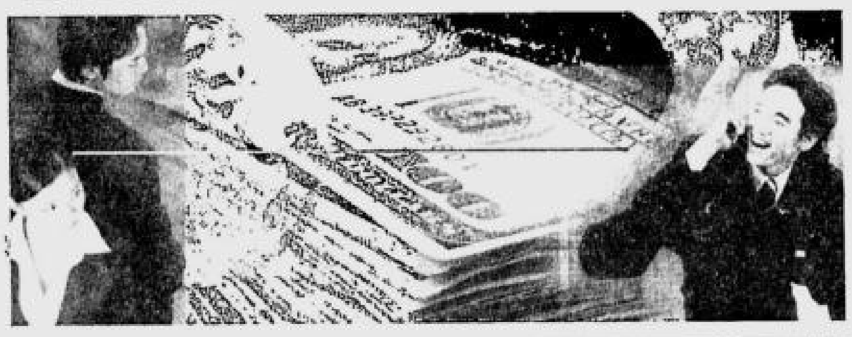

Who Should Attend

Designed for ENTREPRENEURS and PROFESSIONALS who:
- are setting up a Philippine based Medical Transcription (MT) service.
- would like to profit from possible MT Business contacts within the USA.

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IT Outsource
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InnovaQuest
- The country's largest MT business startup company

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Testimonials

Over 400 entrepreneurs trained! See what some of them have to say:

"I always thought Medical Transcription was complicated. The seminar and the presenters gave me the confidence to setup my own MT service while knowing the stumbling blocks within an MT service."
-Dra. Corpuz

"It was a good thing I took the seminar. I was able to learn from the mistakes that otherwise would have cost me millions had I done it without the guidance of the presenters. I'm so glad I learned it the easy way rather than the hard way."
-Mrs. Holganza

"Not only did the seminar give real hard line story about the MT business, but it also gave me the opportunities to grow it as well."
-Mr. Tamayo

Seminar Topics

DAY 1
- Introduction to Medical Transcription (MT)
- MT Industry and Market Assessment
- Latest Trends in the Industry
- HIPAA Compliance for the Offshore MTSO.

DAY 2
- American Perspective and Initiatives on Outsourcing
- The Importance of International Labor Partners
- Quality and Profit in MT: The ROI of quality
- MT Process and Delivery
- MT Resource Requirements
- Medical Transcription Simulation
- Work Routing Simulation

DAY 3
- Marketing to your Target Market
- HR Challenges and Solutions
- Financial Startup Requirements
- Financial Assumptions and Considerations for an MTSO
- Financial Operations Simulation

Optional Private Session : TO ALL ATTENDEES
- Getting transcription work immediately
- Sourcing from MTC's 32 nationwide network of schools

Date / Venue

- February 15 to 17, 2007
  Thursday to Saturday 9AM to 5PM
- G/F Urban Bldg., 405 Senator Gil Puyat Avenue, Bel-Air, Makati City

- REGULAR RATE – Php 35,000 per person,
- EARLY BIRD - Php 29,000 reserve on or before February 13, 2007

(inclusive of food, beverages and handouts)

Download Registration Form at www.mtcacademy.com / Email us: seminar@mtcacademy.com or simply give us a call at 899 - 6822 Ext. 112, 113, and 115 and look for Ms. Cathy or Ms. Niche

WOW! GRABE!

MILYON, LINGGO-LINGGO NA!

2
tulog na lang at Jan. 26 draw na!

PREMYO SA RESIBO

1MILLION PESOS SURE WINNER linggo-linggo! (P1.50 per entry)

Kaya text na at sumali sa Premyo Sa Resibo! Makakatulong ka sa sambayanan, at baka ikaw pa ang maging susunod na instant milyonaryo!

PAANO SUMALI SA P1-M WEEKLY DRAW

Para sa Jan 26 draw, ang resibo ay kailangan may petsang Dec 1, 2006 hanggang Jan 25, 2007 I-text lang ang mga detalye ng inyong mga resibo sa mga susunod na paraan: PSR<space>TIN sa resibo * numero ng resibo * halaga
IMPORTANTE Huwag isama ang "." at sentimo.

Halimbawa
PSR 008003071035*49724*2550
I-text sa 9777 para sa isang text isang raffle entry number. Ang halaga ng resibo ay dapat P100 o higit pa, at P1.50 ang ikakaltas sa iyo. I-text sa 9778 naman kung ang halaga ng resibo ay 350 o higit pa, at gusto mo makakuha ng raffle entry number sa bawat P100 na halaga ng resibo
Halimbawa: kung P2550 ang halaga makakakuha ka ng 26 raffle numbers (2550 ÷ 100 = 26), at kakaltasan ka ng P39.00 (26 x P1.50) Isang beses lang pwedeng i-enter ang bawat resibo sa bawat draw. Importanteng itago ang resibo, dahil kung manalo ka, kailangan ipakita ito bilang pampatunay. Kung peke ang resibo, hindi mo makakamit ang premyo

December 20, 2006
Grand Christmas Draw Millionaire!
Renato Cagay
unemployed
of Duero, Bohol

Tanong? Text PSR HELP sa 9777 or 9778
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Problema sa pagtext? Tumawag sa 338-9777
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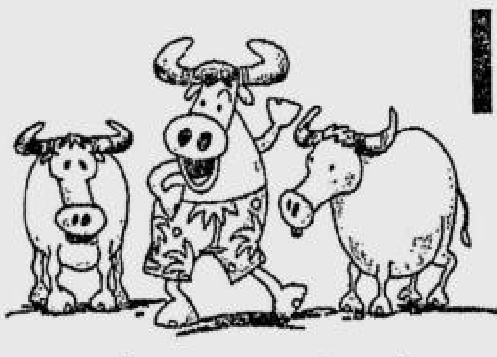
INQUIRER

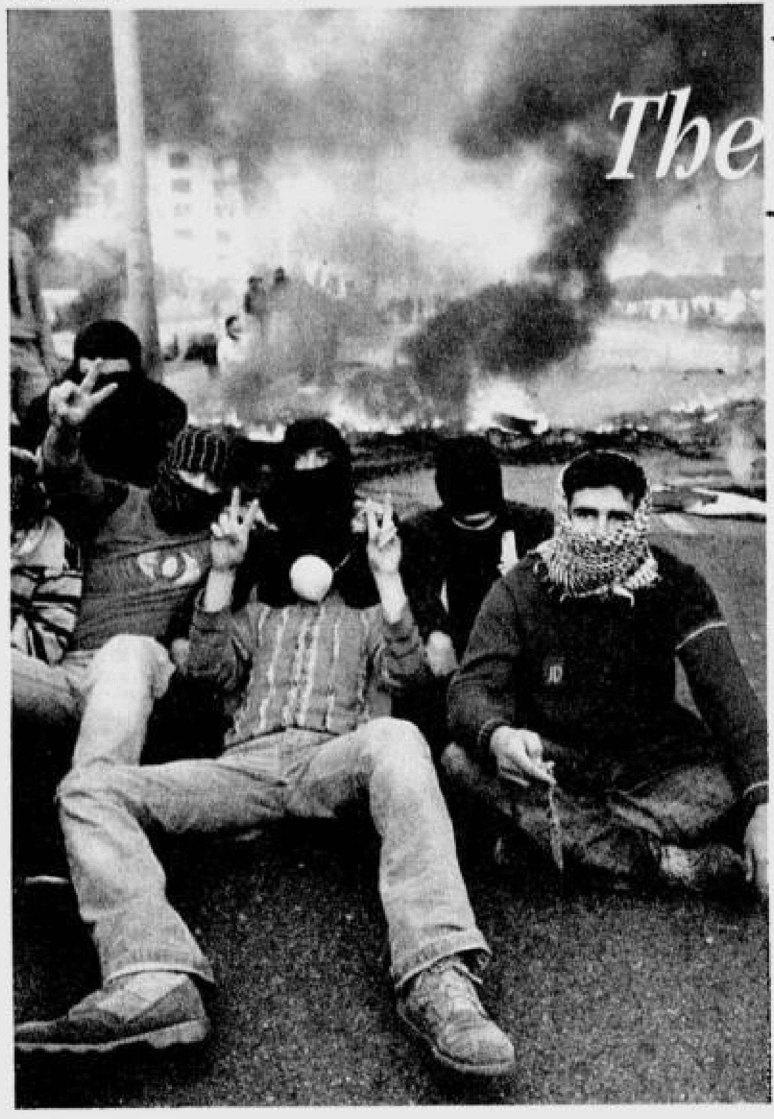


Read it every Sunday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer.
JOB Market

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Protesters out to topple gov't paralyze Lebanon



PROTESTERS pose as burning tires block a street near the government headquarters at the start of a general strike called by the opposition in Beirut Jan. 23. REUTERS

BEIRUT—THOUSANDS OF LEBANESE protesters blocked main roads in Beirut and around the country with rubble and burning tires on Tuesday at the start of a general strike called by the opposition to try to topple the government.

A gunman fired on protesters in the ancient Christian town of Byblos, wounding three people, security sources said.

Soldiers arrested the gunman and seized weapons from his house.

Two protesters were wounded in a similar shooting in Batroun. No other gunfire was reported during the demonstrations across Lebanon, but some scuffles broke out between protesters and pro-government loyalists, especially in Christian areas.

The roads to Lebanon's only international airport and to Beirut port were blocked and several Arab and international airlines suspended flights to Beirut, though the national flag carrier Middle East Airlines (MEA) made no announcement on its plans.

The airport remained operational despite the protest but few workers showed up and passengers were unable to get there or to leave, airport sources said.

Officials denied reports that Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, who will attend an international aid conference in Paris on Thursday, had left Lebanon for France shortly before the strike began. "We are still here (in Beirut)," an aide said.

The strike escalates a campaign by the Hezbollah-led opposition to dislodge the pro-Western government, install a new unity administration and hold early parliamentary elections.

Protesters in Beirut, north, south and east Lebanon took to the streets at around 6 a.m. and began blocking roads. Smoke from burning tires billowed over the capital.

Hezbollah organizers, their faces covered in black masks, prowled on motorcycles, walkie-talkies clamped to their mouths.

Most main roads inside Beirut and leading into the city were closed, as were highways linking the capital to north and south Lebanon and to the Syrian capital Damascus.

Many shops, schools and businesses were closed in Beirut but it was hard to tell whether this was in support of the strike or because people could not get to work past blazing barricades.

Lebanese security forces made sporadic efforts to open roads but made little headway because of the crowds of protesters. *Reuters*

Republicans buck troop hike

WASHINGTON—TOP REPUBLICan senators Monday assailed President George W. Bush's plan to increase US troops in Iraq, adding critical strength to the movement in Congress against his new war plan.

In a rising revolt in Bush's own party, senior Republican Senator John Warner and colleagues proposed a resolution calling on Bush to find alternatives to his plan, announced Jan. 10, to send 21,500 more US troops to Iraq in a last-ditch effort to restore security.

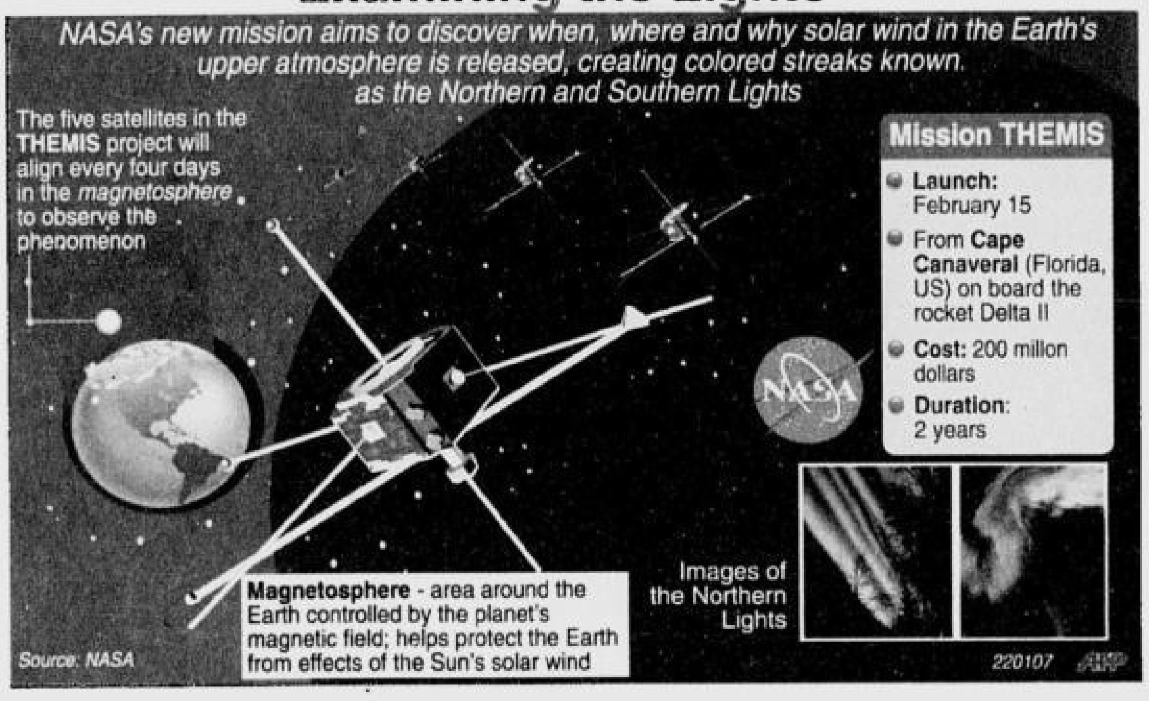
In a press conference together with Republican Senators Susan Collins and Norm Coleman, Warner said the resolution aimed at registering "genuine concerns" in the Congress about Bush's plan.

"It is clear that the United States' strategy and operations in Iraq can only be sustained and achieved with support from the American people and with a level of bipartisanship in Congress," Warner, an influential member of the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee, said.

"The purpose of this resolution is not to cut our forces at the current level or to set any timetables for withdrawal but, rather, to express the genuine, and I repeat, the genuine concerns of a number of senators from both parties about the president's plan," he said.

The non-binding resolution, one of several proposed challenging Bush's war plan but the first offered by such senior Republicans, reads: "The Senate disagrees with the plan to augment our forces by 21,500 and urges the president instead to consider all options and alternatives for achieving the strategic goals set forth below with reduced force levels than proposed." *AFP*

Examining the Lights



NASA's new mission aims to discover when, where and why solar wind in the Earth's upper atmosphere is released, creating colored streaks known. as the Northern and Southern Lights

The five satellites in the **THEMIS** project will align every four days in the *magnetosphere* to observe the phenomenon
Mission THEMIS
Launch: February 15
From Cape Canaveral (Florida, US) on board the rocket Delta II
Cost: 200 millon dollars
Duration: 2 years
Magnetosphere - area around the Earth controlled by the planet's magnetic field; helps protect the Earth from effects of the Sun's solar wind
Images of the Northern Lights
NASA

Source: NASA 220107 AFP

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Republic of the Philippines

7CB-GSC-014

FLOOD CONTROL FOR MAKAR RIVER, PRK. BALUNTO, LABANGAL, GSC
(Name of Project)
different item for flood control (pls. see details @ www.gensantos.gov.ph).

The **Local Government Unit of General Santos City**, through the CY 2007 Annual Budget intends to apply the sum of **Six Million Three Hundred Sixty Eight Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Pesos (P6,368,560.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Flood Control for Makar River, Prk. Balunto, Labangal, GSCI. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.

The **Local Government Unit of General Santos City** now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Flood Control for Makar River, Prk Balunto, Labangal, GSC. Delivery of the GOODS is required by **30 calendar days**. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsive of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **P1,000.00** to the City Treasurer's Office. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos will hold a **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested on **February 1, 2007, 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon** at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of February 13, 2007. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit equivalent to One Percent (1%) of ABC or Bank Guarantee equivalent to One and a half Percent (1 ½%) of ABC or Surety Bond equivalent to Two and a half Percent (2 ½%) of ABC or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on **2:00 o'clock in the afternoon of February 13, 2007 at the BAC Office, 2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City**. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bids and Awards Committee
Gina Y. Pigar
2nd Floor, Right Wing, City Hall Building, General Santos City
Tel. Nos. (083) 301-0553, (083) 302-7210
Fax: (083) 301-0553
website address: www.gensantos.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **NAEL JOSEPH D. CRUSPERO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Jan. 24, 2007)

HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND

INVITATION FOR LEASE

The Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund) is inviting offers for lease by way of individual Sealed Bids, real property (land) for commercial use with various sizes located at Manila Harbour Center, City of Manila.

Terms of Reference and Bid Proposal Form can be secured free of charge at the Office of the Manager, Investment Department, 4th Floor, Room 407, Atrium of Makati Building, Makati Avenue, City of Makati starting January 24, 2007.

Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on February 6, 2007 at 2:00 p.m., Rm. 602, 6th Floor, Multi Purpose Hall, Atrium of Makati Building, Makati Avenue, City of Makati. Schedule of submission and opening of bids shall be announced during the said conference.

The Home Development Mutual Fund reserves the right to reject any or all offers or accept such proposals as may be considered advantageous to the HDMF. Further, the Fund assumes no obligations whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the proponents for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of his offer.

Fur further inquiries and/or information, please call Jose Rommel S. Bayan at 848-8262 or visit our Corporate website at **http://www.pagibigfund.gov.ph** or email us at **jsbayan@pagibigfund.gov.ph**.

(Sgd.) **EMMA LINDA B. FARIA**
SVP, Technical Support

(PDI - Jan. 24 & 31, 2007)

China confirms antisatellite test

BEIJING—CHINA SAID ON Tuesday it had fired a missile at one of its satellites, confirming earlier reports from Washington, but a spokesperson said the test posed no threat and he knew of no plans for a second launch.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Liu Jianchao said the government had told the United States about the test and that he had not heard of any plan for a follow-up missile launch.

"What needs to be stressed is that China has always advocated the peaceful use of space, opposes the weaponization of space and an arms races in space," Liu told a news conference.

"China has never participated and will never participate in any arms race in outer space.

" ... This test was not directed at any country and does not constitute a threat to any country."

China had repeatedly refused to publicly say whether it knocked one its own aging satellites out of the sky with a missile on Jan. 11 in what US officials criticized as a provocative escalation of military competition.

On Monday, a US department of state spokesperson said in Washington that Chinese officials had acknowledged the test when they met US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill in Beijing over the weekend.

Asked about China's delay in reporting the test, Liu said:

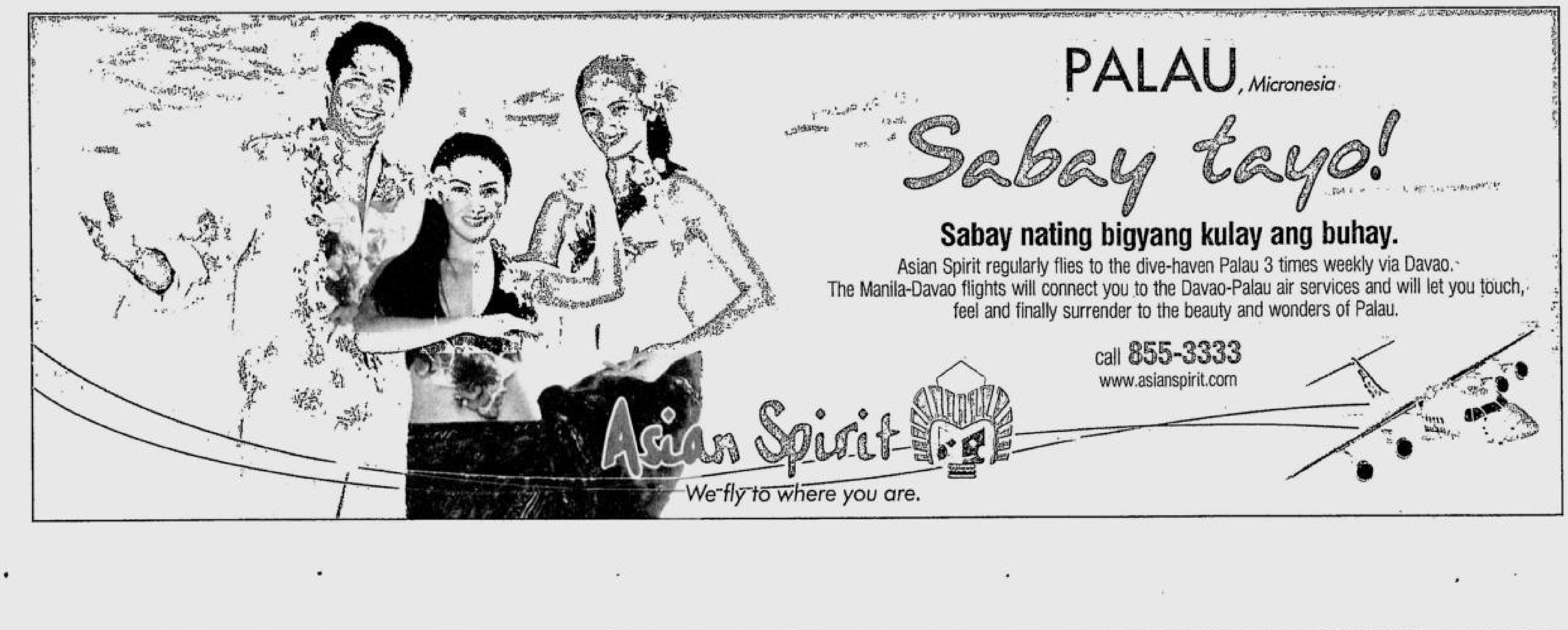
"China has nothing to hide. After various parties expressed concern we explained this test in outer space to them."

No current international treaties or agreements prohibit military strikes against satellites. Prior to the Chinese test, the previous launch was conducted by the United States in September 1985, and officials and experts say the debris from such tests endangers other satellites.

Asked about the danger posed by satellite fragments, Liu said he was not in a position to give an immediate response.

"This is a highly technical question," he said.

Reuters



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WHAT'S INSIDE

Serenas survives Peer pressure /A23

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Fiba: Tokyo pact must prevail

BAP cannot throw away accord by changing its leaders, says SBP's Eala

By June Navarro

OFFICIALS OF THE SAMAHANG BASKETBOL ng Pilipinas brought back from a recent trip to Switzerland a reality that the Basketball Association of the Philippines has to face: You just can't tear up agreements as fast as you change leaders.

Speaking in behalf of the SBP, PBA commissioner Noli Eala made it clear that the BAP is still bound by the joint communique it signed in Tokyo with Pilipinas Basketball.

"The Fiba (international basketball federation) fully agreed that the BAP just can't simply replace its leaders and throw away the agreement," said Eala.

The commissioner was a member of the SBP group of officials that traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, to seek the lifting of the Fiba's suspension on the country.

With Eala in the trip were SBP president and telecommunications tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, the former BAP president, PBA chair Ricky Vargas and PLDT executive Al Panlilio.

Still in effect

At a news conference yesterday, Eala said that Fiba officials, led by secretary-general Patrick Baumann and president Bob Elphinston, also concurred that what former BAP president Joey Lina and past PB head Bernie Atienza had signed in Tokyo is still in effect and binding.

Lina and Atienza are no longer part of the three-man panel that gave birth to the SBP after stepping down from their respective posts.

EALA: When you sign a document, you bind your organization to the agreement. PDI PHOTO

The panel was in charge of creating a unified body for the sport as provided for in the communique.

Estrada replaced Lina but was fired after the BAP charged him of unilaterally tying the beleaguered association into a unity deal with Pangilinan.

"It doesn't mean that since these officials are already gone, the agreements they signed are already void," said Eala. "They (BAP officials) can't just turn their backs on these agreements."

OKd by BAP

The commissioner also stressed that when the panel crafted the SBP constitution and by-laws, as well as its articles of incorporation, it was signed and affirmed by Lina and BAP chair Michele Lhuillier.

"When you sign a document as a

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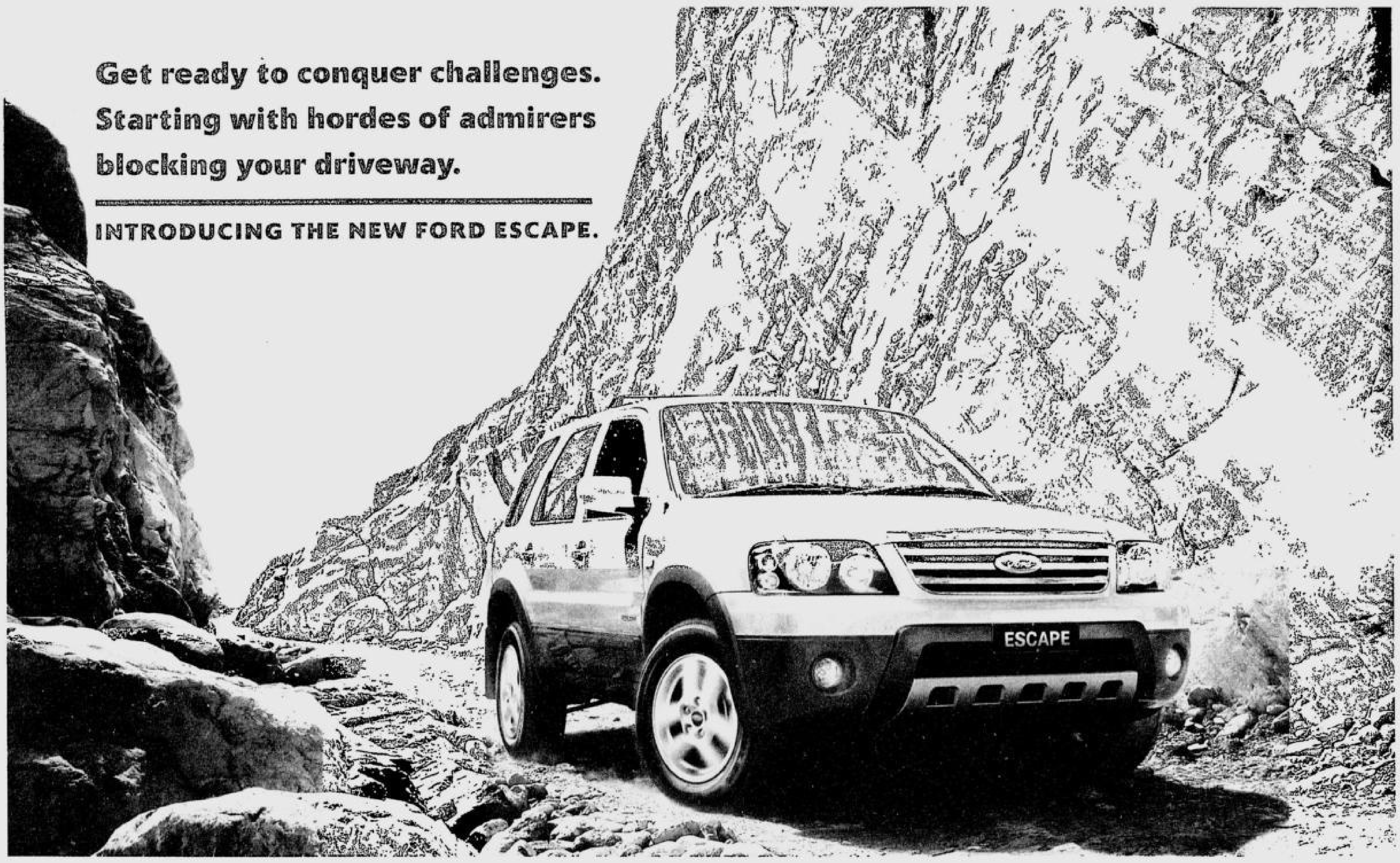

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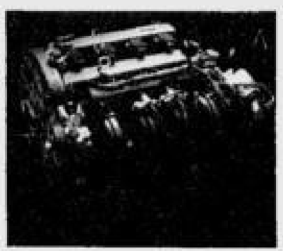

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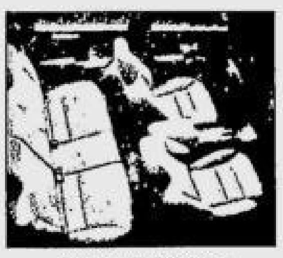

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Rivera assured of bowling slot

By Marc Anthony Reyes

RIVERA

PHILIPPINE BOWLING IS PICKING UP its spares, slowly but surely.

After holding key elections last weekend, the Philippine Bowling Congress set its sights on making up for its debacle in the 15th Asian Games, where RP bowlers failed to win any of the 36 medals at stake despite a powerhouse lineup.

Up ahead is a series of tryouts that will determine the new members of the national team, according to new secretary general Bong Coo.

Only Biboy Rivera, the reigning Masters champion in the World Championships, is assured of a slot in the national team.

"Except for Biboy, everybody is not exempted (from the tryouts)," said PBC president Steve Hontiveros, whose term ends in 2009, along with those of the newly elected members of the board.

There are 20 new board members, representing top clubs and associations all over the country, according to Hontiveros, but the PBC has yet to come up with an official list.

Coo, the winningest Filipino athlete in the Asiad with five gold medals (three in 1978 in Bangkok and two in 1986 in Seoul), succeeded Danny Santos as secretary general during the association's election last weekend.

Cho Cho Cajucom was elected treasurer over Ernest Severino while Jaime Dychauco retained his position as executive vice president.

Members of the RP pool have thrown their support for the new officers.

PSC to beef up athletes' diet

THE DIET OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL team, pardon the pun, needs a little beefing up. And carbohydrates are going to have the biggest chunk.

The Philippine Sports Commission will set up 24-hour carbo-loading stations in the sports complexes under its jurisdiction in a bid to improve on the nutrition of the national team.

Athletes generally load up on carbohydrates before competition to increase their energy level.

PSC chair Butch Ramirez said the scheme is part of a major program of physical fitness, conditioning and performance analysis to be conducted by the Philippine Center for Sports Medicine.

The agency tapped renowned dietician Sanirose Orbeta to help meet the nutritional requirement of the national athletes.

"It is a practice done in Australia, Britain, China and the United States," said Ramirez. "Athletes need round-the-clock food intake especially those training very early in the morning."

Starting in March, Ramirez said there will be one food manager to be assigned at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, PhilSports and the PSC Sports Complex in Baguio.

The PSC spends more than P4 million a year feeding about 1,000 national athletes, a figure Ramirez said will certainly rise in the coming months as the Thailand Southeast Asian Games slated December near. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Toyota-Otis, Hapee snare s'final berths

By Jasmine W. Payo

FOR A LONG TIME THERE, TOYOTA OTIS and Harbour Centre seem to be in cruise control. They were neck-and-neck with both sides refusing to budge an inch.

But come the fourth quarter, the Sparks suddenly sprang to life, revved up and stunned the top-seeded Portmasters, 73-67, yesterday to clinch an outright semifinal slot in the 2007 PBL Silver Cup at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

Held to a 51-51 count after three quarters, the Sparks caught the Portmasters flat-footed with a full court defense that netted an 11-0 run anchored on Marvin Cruz (62-51) and paved the way for their fifth straight victory.

"There were a lot of things that we wanted to do, but we decided to focus on one type of defense—the full court," said Toyota coach Louie Alas.

Earlier, Hapee-PCU also advanced to the semifinals after a 91-80 triumph over Mail and More.

Larry Rodriguez, a standout from the Philippine Maritime Institute, topscored with 17 markers to lead five Teeth Masters in double figures.

Mark Borboran and Mark Moreno also contributed in Hapee-PCU's third-quarter surge to finish with 16 points apiece.

"To enter the semifinals outright is already a bonus for us; I give credit to everyone in the team," said Hapee-PCU coach Jun Noel. "Mail and More was playing good offense, but we were able to adjust our defense."

Despite their losses, Mail and More and Harbour Centre will march to the quarterfinals toting twice-to-beat advantages.

Harbour Centre will face the knockout match winner between Henkel Sista and Magnolia Ice Cream, while Mail and More will take on either TeleTech or Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala in the other pairing.

The Portmasters managed to cut the deficit to 67-65 in the final minute, but Floyd Dedicatoria halted the run with a drive that buffered the Sparks' lead, 69-65, with 41.2 seconds left.

The scores:

First Game

HAPEE-PCU 91—Rodriguez 17, Borboran 16, Moreno 16, Castro 12, Rodriguez 10,Belga 6, Razon 6, Sanz 4, Butel 2, Bucao 2, Larong 0, Hugnatan 0.

MAIL AND MORE 80—Buenafe 19, Quinahan 17, Bravo 12, Aquino 10, Canizares 8, Espiritu 4, Pribhdas 3, David 3, Del Rosario 2, Viray 2, Te 0, Ballesteros 0, Yambao 0.

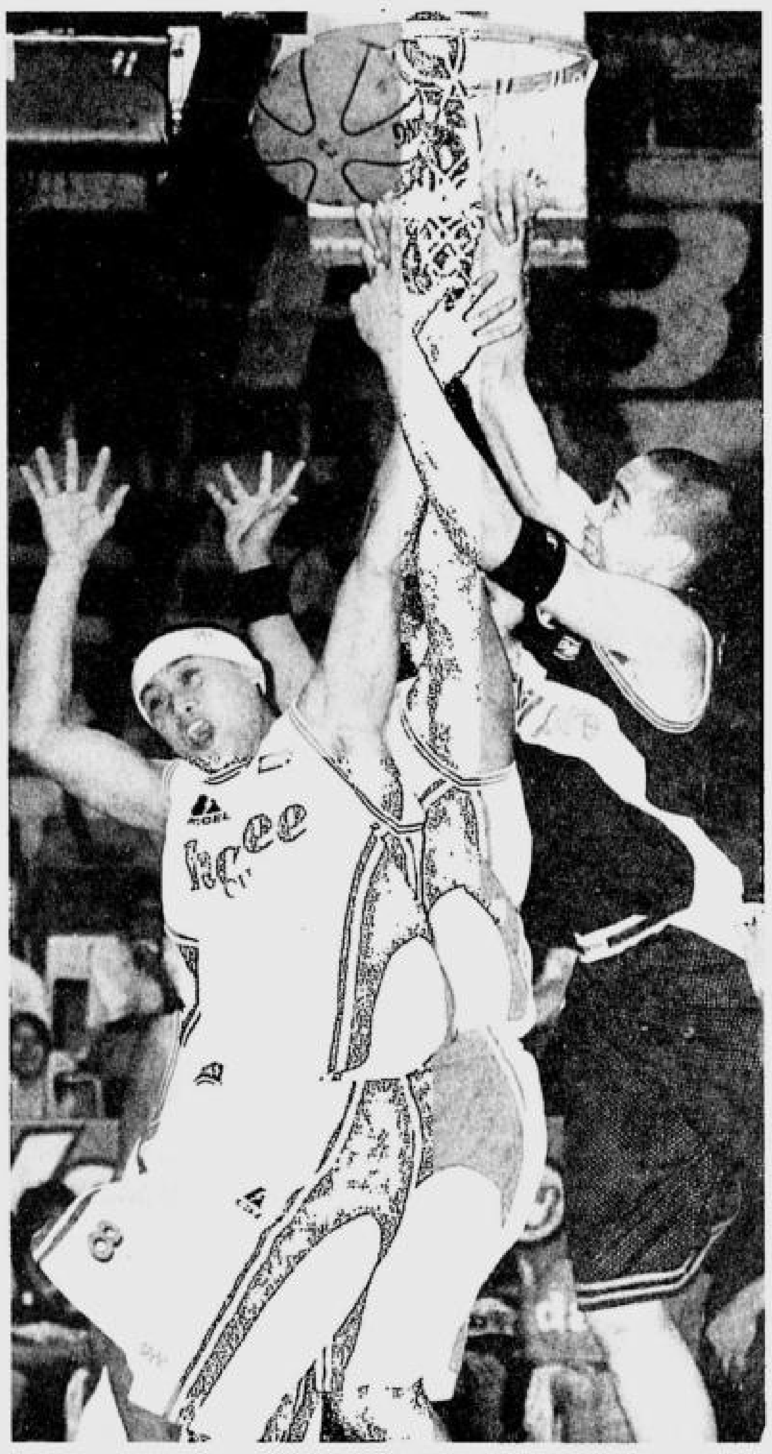
Quarters: 15-21, 40-33, 68-48, 91-80

Second Game

TOYOTA OTIS 73—Daa 18, Cruz 18, Santos 8, Coronel 8, Jaime 7, Cabahug 6, Jazul 3, Rodriguez 3, Dedicatoria 2, Aldave 0, Quinday 0, Guevarra 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 67—Intal 21, Ortiguerra 8, Juntilla 7, Arana 6, Vergara 5, Gamboa 4, Alonzo 4, Gaco 4, Fernandez 3, Lanete 3, Capati 2.

Quarters: 23-20, 39-31, 51-51, 73-67


MAIL AND MORE'S Jorel Canizares battles Hapee's Mark Moreno and Mark Hugnatan for the rebound in yesterday's game. ERIK ARAZAS

110 teams competing in P1.7-M Nat'l Pro-Am

CANTADA

THE KONICA MInolta National Pro-Am will accept only 110 teams, the organizing committee announced yesterday.

Likewise, only the Top 30 teams and ties will receive prizes in the P1.7-million tournament set Feb. 7-10 at The Riviera's Langer in Silang, Cavite.

"Only the cream of the crop in pro-am play take center stage," said Edilberto B. Bravo, the U-Bix Corp. chair who revived the fabled Pro-Am in 2001 in cooperation with the National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP).

A team is composed of a professional and an amateur hitting one ball alternately from tee to green.

The Celebrity Tournament on Feb. 6 will stake the new-generation Altis, as a hole-in-one prize through Toyota Motor Philippines' first vice president Daniel M. Isla.

Isla said the Avanza will also be up for grabs as a hole-in-one prize during the tournament proper in the series which will see Gerard Cantada and JR Tanpinco gun for an unprecedented fourth straight title.

Bravo chairs the executive committee with NGAP president and Transportation Secretary Larry Mendoza and Riviera president Celso G. Castro as co-chairs.

The NGAP offices and The Riviera have been busy screening applicants, many of whom are Korean hopefuls.

Bedbug bio piece could yet be a classic

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

IT'S NOT THE POLICY OF THE INQUIRER to accommodate requests for on-page reprints.

Sorry, but your reporter here had no choice but accede to that frantic—if not applauding—demand for an encore.

Stop wondering now why that chapter in the biography of a bold bedbug saw print again here last time, on Monday to be exact.

The piece, which drew rave review from as far as England, was reprinted under a new title: BAP protest, a replay.

The second edition actually came in the form of a letter addressed to the INQUIRER Ombudsman, Ms Lorna Kalaw-Tirol.

* * *

Ms Tirol suggested that I go over the letter, sent by Basketball Association of the Philippines counsel Bonifacio Alentajan, and come up with a rejoinder.

Atty. Alentajan was kind enough to provide a faithful copy of said column.

We reprinted it, pronto.

We provided no comment whatsoever.

Why? Well the sharp-toothed BAP lawyer did well in stating his case.

Great details about the budding biography of a bedbug are always worth a second read.

* * *

Anyway, Alentajan protested that the column was an effort to malign his hero and client, Graham Lim, the alien who continues to serve as sec-gen of the endangered Basketball Association of the Philippines.

The way the BAP legal counsel sounded, he must've felt he has gained a right over that budding biography.

Actually, Alentajan had threatened to sue us for libel for what we had to report about the misdeeds of Lim.

You know what? There were those who claimed we had undermined the poor insect by trying to put it side by side with the unsinkable BAP sec-gen.

They said bedbugs would always pale in comparison.

This BAP stinger, they claimed, had proved to be a perfect nuisance, a bigger itch in the crotch.

* * *

Well, at least Alentajan tried hard to picture Graham Lim as a sinless hero, one whose style and achievements should be emulated.

If Alentajan had failed in this effort, it was not solely his fault.

It was simply too tall a task.

Sorry, my honest views of Graham Lim, just like those of countless sports fans, did not jibe with that of the BAP legal counsel.

We also have no idea how his head was fixed, or what food he had been fed, for him to able to work doggedly for the dreaded BAP sec-gen.

Lim was exactly the same operator who once boldly reminded us we were next in line among those he would be fixing.

"*Di pa kita naayos* (I haven't fixed you yet)," Lim reminded us in one chance encounter.

For the record, Lim never had the chance to dig into his dirty pocket before us.

* * *

Meanwhile, for those who were wondering, here are some of the responses to that reprinted column:

From a favorite civic worker: "It was all part of due process. You had to print it. Unfortunately, Alentajan, in that letter, also succeeded in mauling his client. What a pity."

From a regular texter: "Congratulations. You have tickled another silent bedbug, *kaya lang, medyo manipis*, this one has thinner carapace. *Mabuhay!*"

From a true lover of RP basketball: "*Lalo lang silang nadiin*. They just made matters worse for themselves. *Nakalimutan na*, people have forgotten, but they brought it back in the open."

From the same civic worker: "Alentajan needs to write to justify attorney's fee. See you."

From a sports editor friend: "He may not have realized it but Alentajan is in the process of elevating that column on the bedbug into a classic."

We hereby grant Atty. Alentajan copyright for the bedbug bio piece. Peace!

SPORTSWATCH

600 shuttlers to vie for RP pool slots

OVER 600 PLAYERS WILL VIE FOR NATIONAL POOL SLOTS WHEN THE Cebu Regional Championship, second stage of the Yonex-Sunrise Badminton Tour, gets going this weekend at the Portside Badminton Center in Cebu City. Chief organizer and Philippine Badminton Association (PBA) grassroots development head Errol Chan said the huge turnout of participants proved that the sport has legions of followers in the provinces. Members of the national team lead the cast in the elite division of the tournament.

Babilonia son among Elite camp hopefuls

THE SON OF THE LATE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION (PBA) center Gido Babilonia joins players from Metro Manila and nearby provinces who will vie for slots in the Elite Basketball Camp on Feb. 11 at the Xavier School Sports Center in Greenhills. Thomas Isaiah Babilonia, whose father once played for San Miguel Beer and Purefoods, will be with San Beda teammates Leeward Lobaton, James Paul Panaligan, Luis Alfonso Revilla and Nicolas Raymond Salva in the tryouts. The players invited by the International Basketball Academy (IBA) are seeking to join the Elite 80 cagers who will play in the camp set March 30 to April 4 at Brent School in Mamplasan, Laguna.

New record set in SJC Int'l Derby

SAN JUAN COLISEUM POSTED A NEW ATTENDANCE RECORD AS MORE than 7,000 cockfight enthusiasts witnessed the opening round of the SJC 8-Cock International Derby on Monday. Supported by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, the event resumes at 4 p.m. today with 122 survivors seeing action in the semifinal round. Twenty-one participants took the early lead with two wins each, led by newly crowned World Slasher Cup champion Patrick Antonio with three entries. Boxing hero Manny Pacquiao's entry, Super Pacman I, tallied one win and one loss. Pit manager Pete Rivera said the new record eclipsed the 6,500 who attended the coliseum's opening in September 2005.

P4M at stake in anniversary 6-cocker

AS MANY AS 400 ENTRIES ARE EXPECTED TO VIE FOR P4 MILLION IN TOtal guaranteed prize in the RMC 17th Anniversary 6-Cock Derby at Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque. The big number of entries has prompted organizers to begin the derby sponsored by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone at 10 a.m. on Jan. 30. Also slated on Feb. 1, 3, 5 and 7, the tournament requires an entry fee of P11,000. The first batch of 150 participants collide in a two-cock elimination round on Jan. 30. "Through the years, Roligon has become the perfect battleground of breeders," said host Rolly Ligon.

Fiba: Tokyo agreement must prevail

From page A21

representative of an organization, you bind your organization with the agreement," said Eala, a lawyer.

"This was a manifestation of the BAP. If they did something *post facto*, the BAP will have to explain it to them (Fiba officials)."

Eala said the SBP delegation also completed its report to the Fiba, explaining that the majority of the requirements in the communique have been complied with, except for the calling of a national congress and the formation of the national team.

The SBP has called for a unity congress on Feb. 5 at the Dusit Hotel and invited all the major stakeholders of the sport from the BAP and PB to attend.

Based on the agreement reached by the panel, Pangilinan will stand as president, Estrada as chair and PBA chair Ricky Vargas as vice chair. Twelve directors each from the BAP and the PB will also be absorbed into the SBP.

Eala said the officers would be elected by acclamation and would serve on an interim basis until 2008 when the organization holds a national election.

"The Fiba, through Mr. Baumann, reiterated that it stands firmly behind the Tokyo agreement and is looking forward to the completion of the work of the panel as soon as practicable," the SBP officials said in a statement.

"The Fiba likewise encouraged the panel to pursue the Unity Congress as the final step towards concluding the mandate of the joint communique," the statement added.

Eala described the meeting with Fiba officials, which also included former secretary-general Boris Stankovic, as productive and favorable to Philippine basketball.

"The SBP gave its assurances to Fiba that it is firmly committed to stay the course by recognizing that the implementation of the Tokyo agreement is critical to the long-term solution of the basketball impasse in the country, and to eventual accreditation by Fiba," the joint SBP statement said.

After the Unity Congress, the SBP will have to form a national team ready to do battle in the international front as required by the communique before it could seek accreditation from the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Fiba.

VICTORIOUS IN MALAYSIA: Milo junior tennis circuit director and delegation head Jovy Mamawal (left) presents the overall champion's trophy, won by Filipino junior players in the recent Tuanku Syed Putra International Junior Tennis Championships, to Milo sports executive Pat Goc-ong as team members Dheo Talatayod and Kim Ivor Saraza look on. The RP-Milo squad copped the general championship of the Malaysian series.

New tennis generation play game of 'Chasing Roger'

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—AT JUST 25, Roger Federer is already the giant that every up-and-comer wants to take down—or least for him to go away.

The Swiss star is on track for a 10th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open and next month will achieve a record stretch as world No. 1, after losing just five of 97 matches on his way to 12 titles last year.

Four of those five losses were to emerging nemesis Rafael Nadal of Spain, and the other to Scotsman Andy Murray—two members of a mob of young guns who are part of a generation which will measure its success against Federer.

Nadal beat Murray in five sets in the fourth round on Monday, and will play Fernando Gonzalez in the quarterfinals.

In addition to two-time French Open winner Nadal and Murray, the group includes France's Richard Gasquet and Gael Monfils and Serbia's Novak Djokovic. Of the group, Nadal is the oldest at 20, with the rest just 19.

Even while still dominant, Federer sees the challenge.

"I know how dangerous young players can be," Federer said.

He defeated Tommy Robredo to advance to the semifinals, and demurred afterward when asked if he was sending a message to his emerging challengers.

"Well, I could have called him, or sent him by mail," Federer said, welcoming the younger generation but adding: "C'mon, I'm only 25. And I am very motivated."

Federer was denied a Grand Slam—winning all four majors—last year by Nadal at Roland Garros, but became the first man since Rod Laver completed his second Grand Slam in 1969 to make the finals in all four majors in a single season.

He already has enough entry rankings points to ensure that by the end of February he'll break Jimmy Connors' record of 160 consecutive weeks at No. 1.

But he said has had to learn to deal with the pressure of being No. 1.

"Guys know they always have a chance on the day," he said.

A chance, yes. But a seemingly slim one.

Murray said he's already looking forward to a time when the giant is slain—or at least retired—so the rest of them could get some proper rivalries going. *AP*

Serena survives Peer pressure

MELBOURNE—SERENA Williams relied on her greatest attribute to reach the Australian Open semifinals.

"I am the ultimate competitor," the former No. 1 player said after overcoming an error-strewn first set and a back-and-forth decider Tuesday to beat 16th-seeded Shahar Peer, 3-6, 6-2, 8-6.

"I feel awesome. I'm excited to be out here. I'm just so happy to be back out here competing," she said after breaking the 19-year-old Peer to finish the match in 2 hours, 34 minutes.

Andy Roddick beat longtime friend and former housemate Mardy Fish, 6-2, 6-2, 6-2, making only four unforced errors in the first of the men's quarterfinals.

He next faces top-ranked Roger Federer, who defeated No. 7 Tommy Robredo, 6-3, 7-6(2), 7-5, in a later quarterfinal.

Roddick beat Federer in an exhibition match before the season's first major, but has lost 11 of their 12 head-to-heads on the ATP Tour.

He would like another chance.

"I would love to play Roger," Roddick said. "I've lost to him a bunch of times. He's a great player, but I feel like I am improving a lot right now."

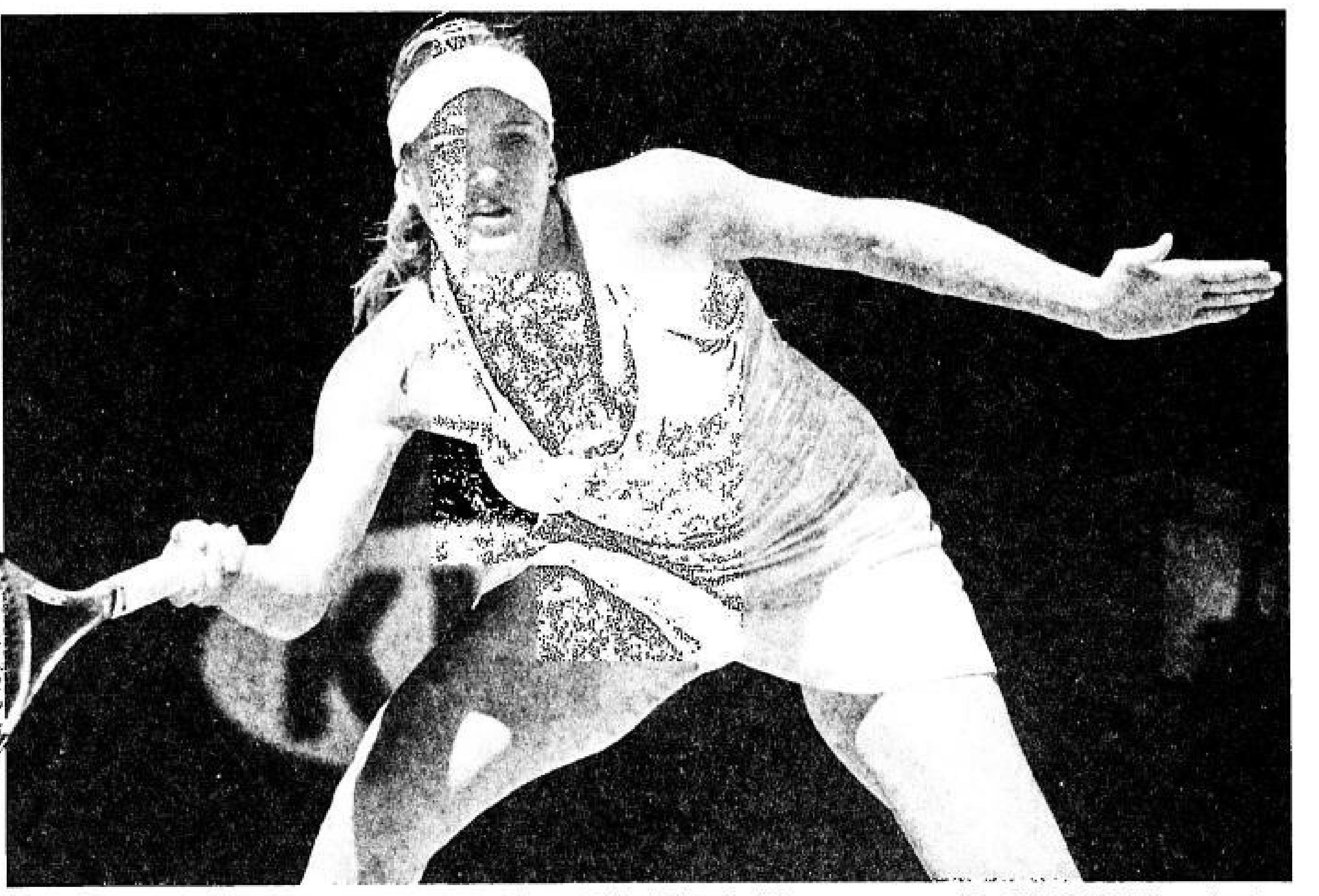
Don't count Williams out. She said critics should not have knocked her when she was down.

Coming into the season's first major ranked No. 81 after an injuries ruined 2006, Williams has won five consecutive matches for the first time since capturing the last of her seven Grand Slam singles titles here in 2005.

"I've got plenty left in the tank," she said. "Definitely ready to create some more carnage."

Williams next plays 17-year-old Nicole Vaidisova, who beat fellow Czech Lucie Safarova, 6-1, 6-4, to reach her second Grand Slam semifinal.

"It's great for Czech tennis to have two in the quarterfinals, one in the semis," the 10th-seeded Vaidisova said.



NICOLE Vaidisova (top) marches straight to the semifinals in the women's division, where she will face a resurgent Serena Williams (third from left). Other top seeds who advanced were Rafael Nadal (left), Maria Sharapova (second from left) and Andy Roddick. AP, AFP, REUTERS

Top-seeded Maria Sharapova downed No. 22 Vera Zvonareva, 7-5, 6-4, Monday and will play another all-Russian match in the quarterfinals after 12th-seeded Ana Chakvetadze beat No. 8 Patty Schnyder, 6-4, 6-1.

No. 4 Kim Clijsters and three-time champion Martina Hingis will meet in the quarters here for the second straight year. Clijsters ended Hingis' remarkable comeback in her first major after three years on the sidelines last year.

Rafael Nadal finally got to see how he holds up against a guy who can also beat Federer in a match that started late Monday and finished well after midnight.

He outlasted the 19-year-old Andy Murray, twice rallying from a set down to win, 6-7 (3), 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1, and reach the Australian Open quarterfinals.

"It was a very, very, very important match for me, very tough," Nadal said.

Nadal, who has been ranked No. 2 to Federer every week since July 2005, had to fend off 10 break points in the last two sets.

Federer lost only five of 97 matches last year: Nadal was responsible for four of those—all in finals—and Murray pulled an upset at Cincinnati that ended the Swiss star's 55-match winning streak in North America.

Murray said his narrow loss to Nadal was the best he's ever played.

Nadal next faces No. 10 Fernando Gonzalez, who beat fifth-seeded James Blake, 7-5, 6-4, 7-6 (4). *AP*

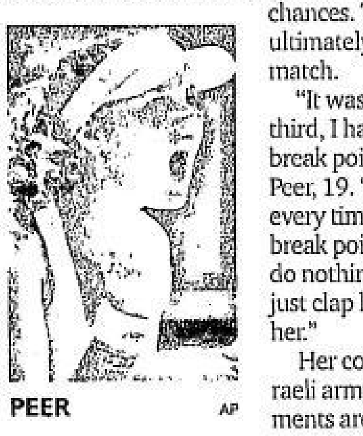
Sniper's miss still leaves everyone impressed

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—A PART-TIME Israeli army soldier who graduated near the top of her class in sharpshooting nearly ended Serena Williams' run to a potential eighth Grand Slam singles title.

Shahar Peer, who will become Israel's highest-ranked women's player when she moves to at least No. 14 after the Australian Open, was two points away from beating Williams before the American came back for a 3-6, 6-2, 8-6 win.

"She's a champion and she knows how to handle these situations," Peer said. "She was playing too good in the end."

Peer wasn't good at converting break points—she managed only three of 13, while Williams, befitting a player who has seven Grand Slam singles titles, was good on five of six chances. That statistic ultimately decided the match.



PEER AP

"It was 4-all in the third, I had three break points," said Peer, 19. "She aced me every time, on two break points. You can do nothing. You can just clap hands for her."

Her compulsory Israeli army commitments are flexible—professional athletes are allowed to travel and fit their military duties in when home for a few hours each day.

She scored highly in rifle shooting during the basic training, a fact she could attribute to her proficiency in aiming pinpoint forehands and two-handed backhands across the net.

"I don't know if it's from tennis or whatever, but I really liked it," she said of the marksmanship training. "I was not bad." *AP*

No problem working together for Nuggets' Anthony, Iverson

DENVER—TOGETHER AT LAST, Carmelo Anthony and Allen Iverson began their quest on Monday to prove two NBA superstars can coexist. So far, so very, very good.

Anthony scored 28 points in his return from a 15-game suspension for fighting and Iverson added 23 in the Denver Nuggets' 115-98 rout of the Memphis Grizzlies.

After receiving a resounding ovation during introductions, Anthony took the microphone and thanked fans, teammates and Nuggets owner Stan Kroenke for supporting him during his forced 36-day layoff.

"It's like a new beginning for us," Anthony said. "And we're going to give y'all something to cheer for."

"I was just ready to get back out on the court," Anthony said. "I just wanted to not try to rush anything and just let the game come to me, and I think I did an OK job tonight for my first game back.

"I think once we get the chemistry down pat and get to clicking, it's going to be tough for people out there."

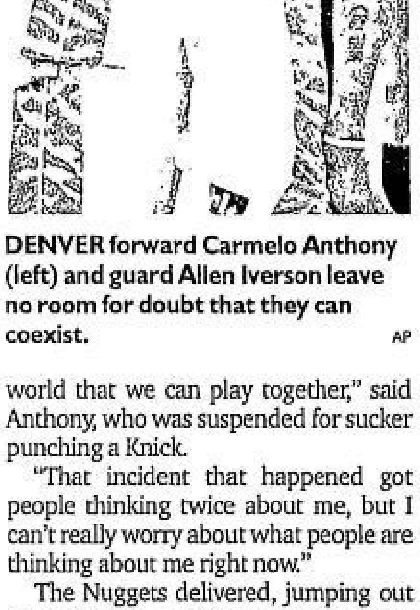
Anthony finished with 28 points, five rebounds and six assists while Iverson had 23, four and seven.

Denver came into the game riding a three-game win streak and was energized by the return of Anthony, racing out to a 38-18 lead after the first quarter.

"Guys were excited out there, the atmosphere was great and it was just electric in here," Iverson said.

"Guys just wanted it for him (Anthony) and wanted it for each other."

The Nuggets led, 59-47, at the half behind 15 points from Anthony and 13 from Iverson.



DENVER forward Carmelo Anthony (left) and guard Allen Iverson leave no room for doubt that they can coexist. AP

"We just wanted to show the whole world that we can play together," said Anthony, who was suspended for sucker punching a Knick.

"That incident that happened got people thinking twice about me, but I can't really worry about what people are thinking about me right now."

The Nuggets delivered, jumping out to a 20-point first-quarter lead, never trailing and turning it on in the fourth quarter with a series of alley-oop jams from Iverson to Anthony that capped the duo's debut.

Marcus Camby had 17 points and 17 boards and JR Smith scored 19 points for the energized Nuggets.

Memphis got 23 points from Pau Gasol.

"I think they played well. They had fun together and that's very important," Gasol said of Iverson and Anthony.

Elswehere in the NBA, it was Orlando 90, Cleveland 79; Indiana 98, Chicago 91; Toronto 105, Charlotte 84; San Antonio 93, Boston 89; Miami 101, New York 83; Utah 106, Minnesota 91; Denver 115, Memphis 98; Sacramento 88, New Jersey 87; LA Lakers 108, Golden State 103.

In Miami, playing without their two NBA All-Stars, Miami scored a franchise-record 27 consecutive points in beating New York.

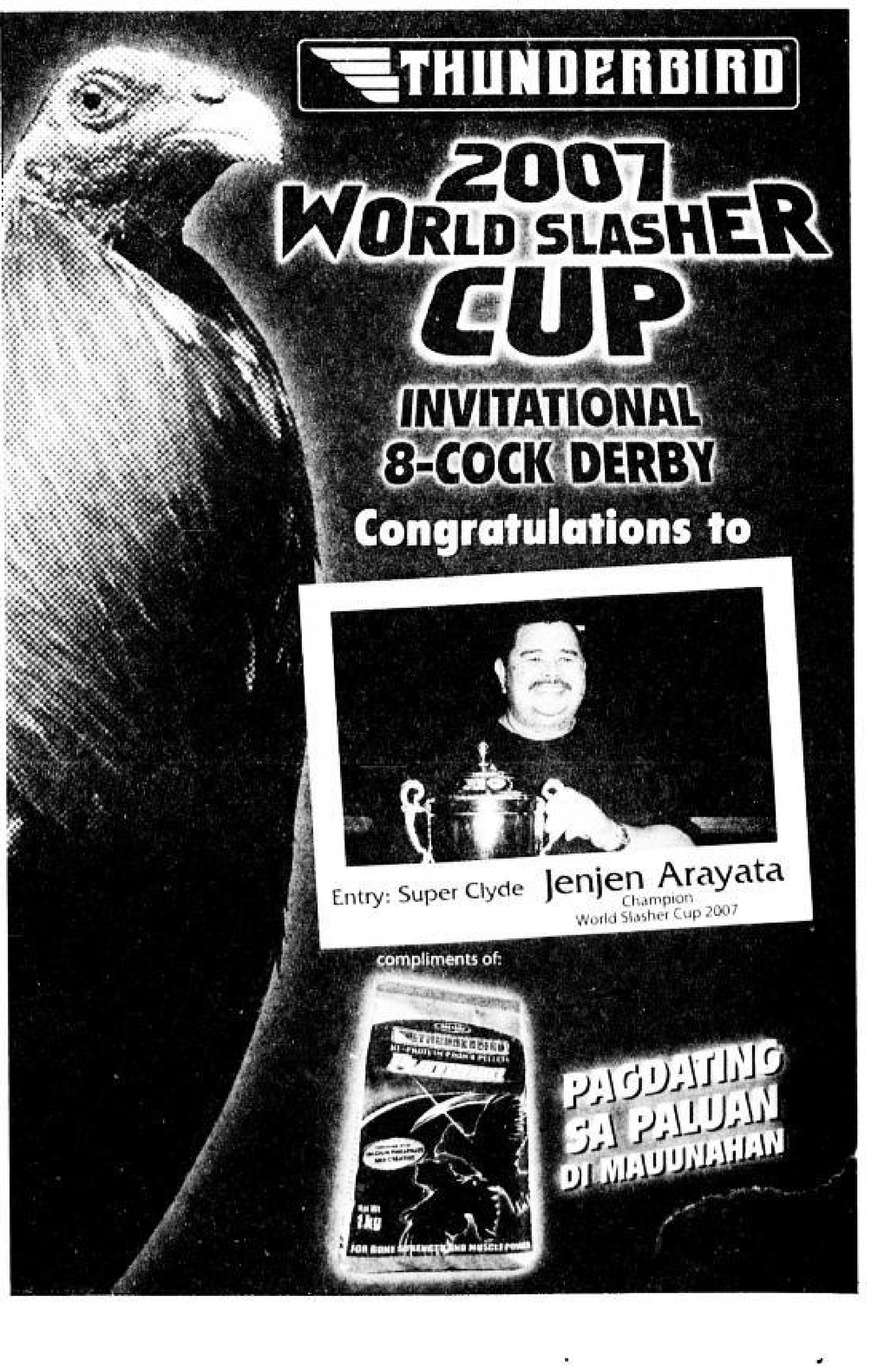
Dwyane Wade and Shaquille O'Neal watched from the bench as Miami raced to a 29-3 lead after 8.5 minutes. The Knicks missed 10 consecutive shots as their 3-2 lead became a 26-point deficit, while the Heat started 13-for-19 and outscored New York 14-0 in the paint at the outset.

Wade decided shortly before the game to rest the left ankle he sprained on Sunday in a loss to Dallas, and O'Neal missed his 35th consecutive game as he nears a return from knee surgery.

Jason Williams scored 20 points, Jason Kapono fueled the Heat's early run and scored 22.

In Boston, Tim Duncan remained unbeaten against Boston, finishing with 21 points and nine rebounds to lead San Antonio.

Manu Ginobili and Tony Parker each scored 15 points for the Spurs, who have won 18 straight against the Celtics and nine in a row in Boston. The Celtics last beat the Spurs in January 1997, the season before Duncan joined the NBA. *AP*



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SPORTS

ELAINE (above left) and Eunice put their best foot forward. RYAN LIM

Fighting sisters, they're for real

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WITH THE WAY THEY TAKE ON OPPOnents and the way they look, they remind us of the cute, popular characters in Sailor Moon, an anime series about young girls gifted with martial arts prowess, among others, so they could defend Earth from evil forces.

But teenaged sisters Elaine and Eunice Alora are slowly proving that heroism is not confined to the boob tube.

And while their mission isn't as grandiose as saving the planet from extinction, in the realm of real life, it is nevertheless a noble one.

The Alora sisters are two of the country's top taekwondo jins. One is a bronze medalist in the recent 15th Asian Games, while the other is a Southeast Asian Games champion. Together, they are aiming to help the country kick up a storm in the Beijing Olympics next year.

Both former age-group champions, the Alora sisters emerged from the grassroots after winning division championships in tournaments sanctioned by the Philippine Taekwondo Association. More than the medal, the PTA gave them an even bigger prize: Precious slots in the national team.

The gamble on the two then-untested jins paid off.

The 17-year-old Elaine, the younger of the two, got the first break after making it to the RP team and copping the featherweight gold medal in the 2005 SEAG.

"It was Elaine who took up the sport first," said their mother Marilou, who grudgingly supported their pastime, despite the usual maternal jitters at watching her daughters get involved in a contact sport. "She started in school clubs in Laguna and that's where the coach noticed her potential."

Elaine, who her mother described as boyish, was six years old when she started as a young jin for Alpha Angelicum.

"I noticed that she was really enjoying the game and she didn't mind if she got hurt," added Marilou who was initially wary of the kick-heavy sport, especially after Elaine broke a thigh bone in an accident when she was five.

The older Eunice, now 19, then took notice and started joining school-based competitions as well.

"I like the training and the chance to meet people," said Eunice, a business studies freshman at De La Salle University.

Eunice surprised many when she took up the sport, her mother said, because everyone always saw her as dainty and fragile.

At 5-foot-3, Eunice is also shorter than her sister by four inches. But that's about the only part where she fails to measure up to Elaine. She is never short on talent.

Last month, she helped the Philippines barge into the medal tally with her bronze in the finweight division.

Both are now hoping to get a shot at the Olympics, which according to their mother, is their ultimate dream.

"Right now we are really concentrated on training and studies, we even don't have time to entertain suitors," said Eunice. "Which is a good thing because we must learn to prioritize things."

Barako, Phone Pals take on league 'heavies' today

RED BULL AND TALK 'N TEXT, TEAMS COMING OFF SURPRISINGLY EASY quarterfinal victories, slug it out with separate top-ranked foes today as Final Four action in the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup gets off the wraps at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

Barako coach Yeng Guiao fears just one match-up problem in his best-of-seven series with San Miguel Beer starting at 4:35 p.m., while Phone Pals mentor Derrick Pumaren may have earned a reprieve of sorts with one key man out of the Barangay Ginebra starting lineup.

Eric Menk is reportedly suffering from a serious calf injury and could be out for the rest of the series versus the Phone Pals, starting with Game 1 at 7:20 p.m.

And this gives Talk 'N Text a huge advantage in the middle, the Phone Pals being a top-heavy side after the arrival of Yancy de Ocampo and the sustained brilliance of Asi Taulava, Harvey Carey and Jay Washington.

This development certainly augurs well for the Phone Pals, the only team the Gin Kings have yet to defeat in this tournament.

Most of the power-playing chores inside will be left on the shoulders of Rudy Hatfield, the Kings' workhorse of a forward who led the tournament in rebounds with more than 11 a game in the classification phase.

"We're not even going to think like that (that Menk will be out)," TNT coach Derrick Pumaren said. "We're going to prepare (for the series) like we will be playing a complete team."

Billy Mamaril and Rafi Reavis will have to step up to make up for the absence of Menk, who plays hard-nosed defense while getting big numbers on the scoreboard at the same time.

GINEBRA will be missing Eric Menk.

Also an interesting sidelight is how the battle in the frontcourt will turn out, with Mark Caguioa and Jay-Jay Helterbrand spearheading the Kings and Jimmy Alapag, Ren Ren Ritualo and a surging Mac-Mac Cardona leading the fight for Talk 'N Text.

Guiao, meanwhile, is worried about only one person in the San Miguel Beer lineup, 6-foot-7 forward Danny Seigle.

"We match up with them well, traditionally," Guiao told reporters. "My only worry is how to match up with Danny Seigle.

"If I put a small man on him, he will play inside," Guiao explained. "But if I put a big man, he can kill us by driving to the basket."

Red Bull and Talk 'N Text got to this stage by eliminating Sta. Lucia Realty and defending champion Purefoods, respectively, via 3-1 scores.

And Guiao feels that playing four games would serve his team in good stead. After all, they will be playing a side that will be coming off a break of close to four weeks.

"They (Beermen) could be rusty," Guiao said. "But of course, we don't have to depend on that." *Musong R. Castillo*

Holy Family tossers win twice, seize WVL lead;

HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL SWEPT ITS TWIN assignments over the weekend and assumed solo leadership in Group A of the high school competitive level in the 2007 Milo BEST Center Women's Volleybal League at the Xavier School gym.

HFS dominated St. Theresa's College in a 25-20, 25-17 win but relied on the brilliance of spiker Angeli Araneta to beat St. Mary's College, 26-24, 23-25, 15-12, in its second assignment and rise to the top of the standings at 3-0.

School of St. Anthony and St. Scholastica's College Manila shared second spot with 2-0 cards.

The SSA spikers whipped Sienna, 25-21, 25-20, while SSC ripped Assumption, 25-13, 25-11.

Group B leader

PWU-Jasms rapped Antipolo Lady of Lourdes School, 25-23, 25-15; San Antonio de Padua College subdued San Pedro Poveda LC, 25-16, 17-25, 15-11; and Antipolo Lady of Lourdes School downed St. James Academy, 25-21, 11-25, 16-14, in the other prep competitive matches.

A closely-knit New Era University squad topped Angelicum College, 25-15, 25-16, to seize the Group B lead in the high school developmental division.

In other prep developmental results, San Beda-Rizal downed Immaculate Heart of Mary College, 25-23, 25-22; Southville won over Holy Trinity Academy by default; St. Theresa's outplayed Paref-Rosehill, 25-23, 25-13; La Salle-Antipolo whipped SBC Rizal, 27-25, 25-10; and Paref-Rosehill won over Notre Dame of Greater Manila by default.

Paragua breaks silence, denies game-fixing raps

AFTER WEEKS SHYING AWAY FROM THE issue, Grandmaster Mark Paragua finally broke his silence Monday night and denied involvement in the game-fixing controversy that has rocked the country's chess community.

Paragua defended himself from accusations that he, along with International Masters Ronald Dableo and Darwin Laylo and a handful of lower-ranked players, connived with each other to fix the results of certain tournaments in their favor.

"*Walang katotohanan 'yan* (It's not true)," said Paragua, the country's No. 1 player with an Elo of 2573. "*Hinding-hindi ako nag*-game fixing *sa kahit na anong* tournament *na sinalihan ko* (Never have I engaged in game-fixing in all tournaments I took part in)."

The 22-year-old Paragua said he is willing to face the National Chess Federation of the Philippines board to prove his innocence.

He said the allegations were "the handiwork of other players and officials who envy us, particularly players who can't attain high rankings."

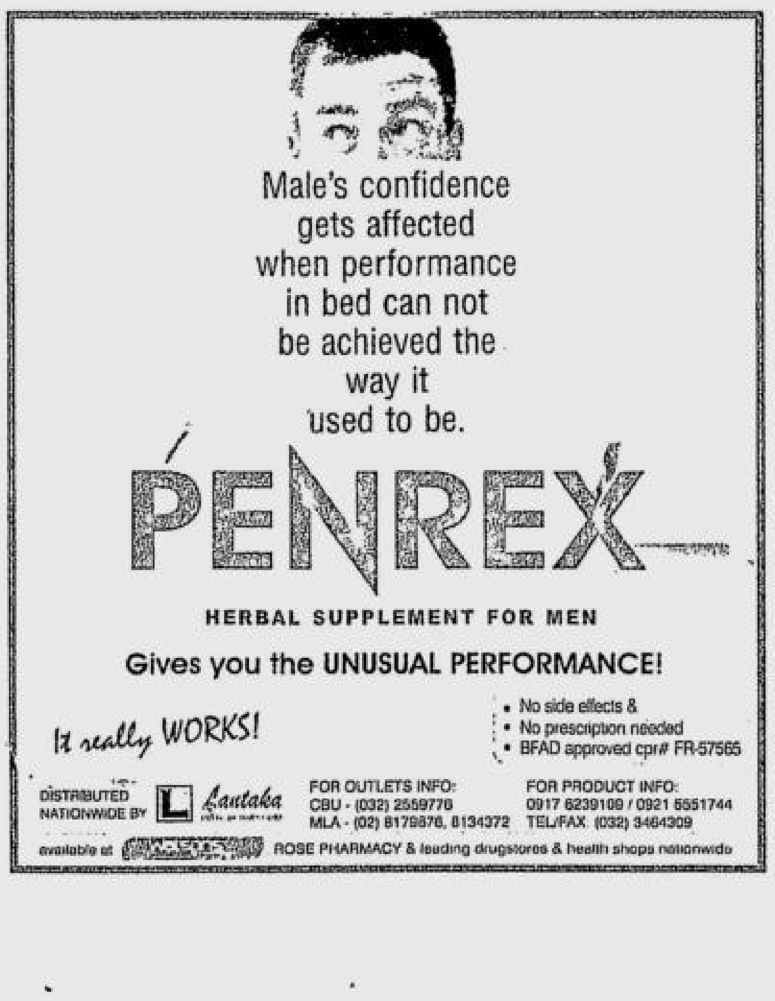
In last year's Tanauan Open, where NCFP officials said the evidence of rampant game-fixing was strong, Paragua said he did not deliberately drop his final round match with eventual champion IM Chito Garma.

"Garma really beat us because he was playing superbly that time," said Paragua. "He even beat (GMs) Eugene (Torre) and Joey (Antonio) and only Richard Bitoon was able to draw with him."

Paragua lamented that the controversy has affected him and his family so much.

"It hurts to be accused of something you did not do," he said. *NM Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

PARAGUA: Not me.



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RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Prince Valiant (2), Mark's Rose (6), Stradivarious (7), Yoshiwara (8), Heart of Jonna (10)

Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Hurry Prince (5), Lovely Tara (6), Top Quest (3), Fine Officer (2)

Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Boss UFO Naman (8), Prince Carlo (2), Jen Is Nice (1), La Truena/Lady Thunder (3), Visionary/Sister Moon (4)

Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Happy Again/Kalashnikov (6), Air Power (9), Kawiliwili (4), Royal Rose (1), Brazen Truth (2)

Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Andorra (2), Ingay Ingay (1), Don Ramon (4), Chicklet (7), Scarab (10)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Ayan Na Ko (1), Dato's Pride (3), Joker (10), Queen Banana (11), Classy Pages (12)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Hok Kee Hok (8), Golden Lance (14), Advance Party (9), Irish Connection (6), Take a Strike (10)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Defiant (1), Real Black (2), Manila's Style (3), Kaibigan (8), BMI Baby (9), Speed Attraction (10)

Kiddies chess tourney set

THE JANUARY EDITION OF THE MCC KIDDIES Standard chess tourney reels off Saturday at the Upper second floor of St. Francis Square, behind SM Megamall, in Mandaluyong City. The two-day event is open to players who are 14 years and younger. The event will adopt the five-round Swiss and time control of 90 minutes. Up for grabs are cash prizes and medals for the top four finishers.

AIM alumni tee up Feb. 5

THE FIFTH ASIAN INSTITUTE OF MANagement (AIM) Masters Invitational Golf Tournament tees off Feb. 5 at the Sherwood Golf and Country Club in Cavite.

A scholarship program at AIM, the 38-year-old management institution that prides itself as one of Asia's finest, is among the beneficiaries of the annual fund-raising tournament, according to organizers.

Hundreds of AIM alumni golfers are expected to vie for top honors and prizes, including the P100,000 cash prize for the first hole in one, in classes A, B, and C.

Registration fee is P2,500, inclusive of green fees, buffet lunch, and giveaway items. A raffle will be held during the awarding ceremonies.

"This is part of our year-round fundraising activities which will culminate in the holding of our annual alumni homecoming night," said Ricardo Pascua, chair of the AIM Alumni Association. "We are calling on all AIM graduates to support this tournament and at the same time reminisce the times they spent at AIM."

Deadline for registration is Jan. 30. For inquiries, call tel. nos. 892-2231, 892-1768 or 750-6575.

Baron Travel golf stakes cruises

FOUR CARIBBEAN CRUISE PACKAGES ARE at stake as hole-in-one prizes in the fourth Baron Travel-Royal Caribbean Golf Classic Friday at the Manila Southwoods in Carmona, Cavite.

If not won, these cruise packages, all inclusive of air fare, and other prizes such as domestic and international plane tickets will be raffled off during the awards ceremony.

Baron Travel Corp. and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. are hosting the annual tournament for its corporate clients at Southwoods' Legends course. Tee off time is 7:30 a.m.

Baron Travel has almost 39 years of market leadership in the travel and tourism industry while Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., represented in the Philippines by Arpan Air, Inc., is a global cruise company that operates the Royal Caribbean International and Celebrity Cruises.

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Foreign investors turn bullish on RP

See stronger peso, high economic growth in '07

By Ronnel W. Domingo and Doris C. Dumlao

FOREIGN INVESTORS DOING BUSINESS HERE ARE turning more bullish on the country's economic prospects this year and beyond.

The world's biggest financial conglomerate Citigroup expects private investments picking up in the Philippines after the May elections, supporting a gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 5.7 percent this year.

According to Lim Ai Meun, Citigroup head of research communications for investments business, an investment-led growth will contribute to an improvement in loan demand over the medium term while demand for residential property will rise with the declining cost of mortgage lending.

Citigroup also sees inflation easing to 4.7 percent, or within the government's target range of 4-5 percent for this year.

Kevin Grice, senior economist at AEB's London-based global economics unit, added that the overall economic environment in the country would remain very favorable and supportive of more capital flows.

Grice predicted that growth in gross domestic product would pick up to at least 6 percent this year and that inflation would ease further in line with the government's expectation of a 4-5 percent range.

He said remittance inflows from overseas workers would remain robust, growth in bank lending would continue to improve and on the overall, the economy was well-placed to grow at a faster pace than last year.

Grice sees the peso peaking at the 47:$1 levels in the next three months before heading back to 48:$1 over a 12-month period once the Bangko Sentral starts cutting interest rates to temper the currency's sharp appreciation.

"I think the policy improvement is fairly well-entrenched now and fiscal improvements should continue," Grice said, betting that there would not be any serious fiscal deterioration likely to arise from the May elections.

"Foreign investor confidence has improved and will continue to improve and the central bank seems to be managing monetary policy very well," he said.

An umbrella group of foreign business chambers yesterday noted that the Philippines could attract up to $9 billion in investments a year if more reforms were implemented and sustained.

According to the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce of the Philippines, this potential was evident with the 75-

FOREIGN/ B3

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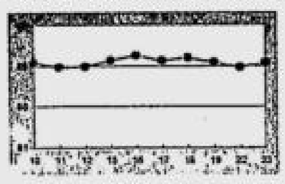

JANUARY

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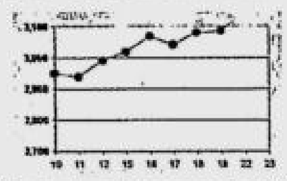
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 23, 2007

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks rise on upbeat economic, corporate outlook

SHARES ROSE FOR THE FOURTH STRAIGHT session to their highest in nearly 10 years yesterday as a favorable economic and corporate outlook fueled investors' appetite for equities.

The benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 58.06 points, or 1.9 percent, to 3,199.34, its best finish since March 31, 1997. Yesterday's rally brings the total

STOCKS/ B2

Budget gap seen at a low ₱39B

By Michelle V. Remo

BEAR, STEARNS & CO. INC. HAS ESTIMATED that the Philippine government would sustain improvements in its fiscal condition, with the budget deficit substantially dropping to only P39 billion this year.

"This outcome should be positive for Philippine sovereign bonds," Bear Stearns said in its latest assessment of the Philippine economy.

Spreads on latest $1 billion in global bonds issued by the government were much tighter and the securities were oversubscribed by nine times amid market optimism on the country's fiscal standing.

The US-based investment bank based its deficit forecast on assumptions that the government's revenue collection would improve.

Bear Stearns noted the P766-billion tax collection target assigned by the national government to the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the P228 billion in taxes and duties assigned to the Bureau of Customs for 2007.

Taking into account Bear Stearns conservative estimate that the government's non-tax revenue collection for this year would reach P150 billion, then total revenues (including taxes, duties and non-tax income such as proceeds from privatization)

BUDGET/ B3

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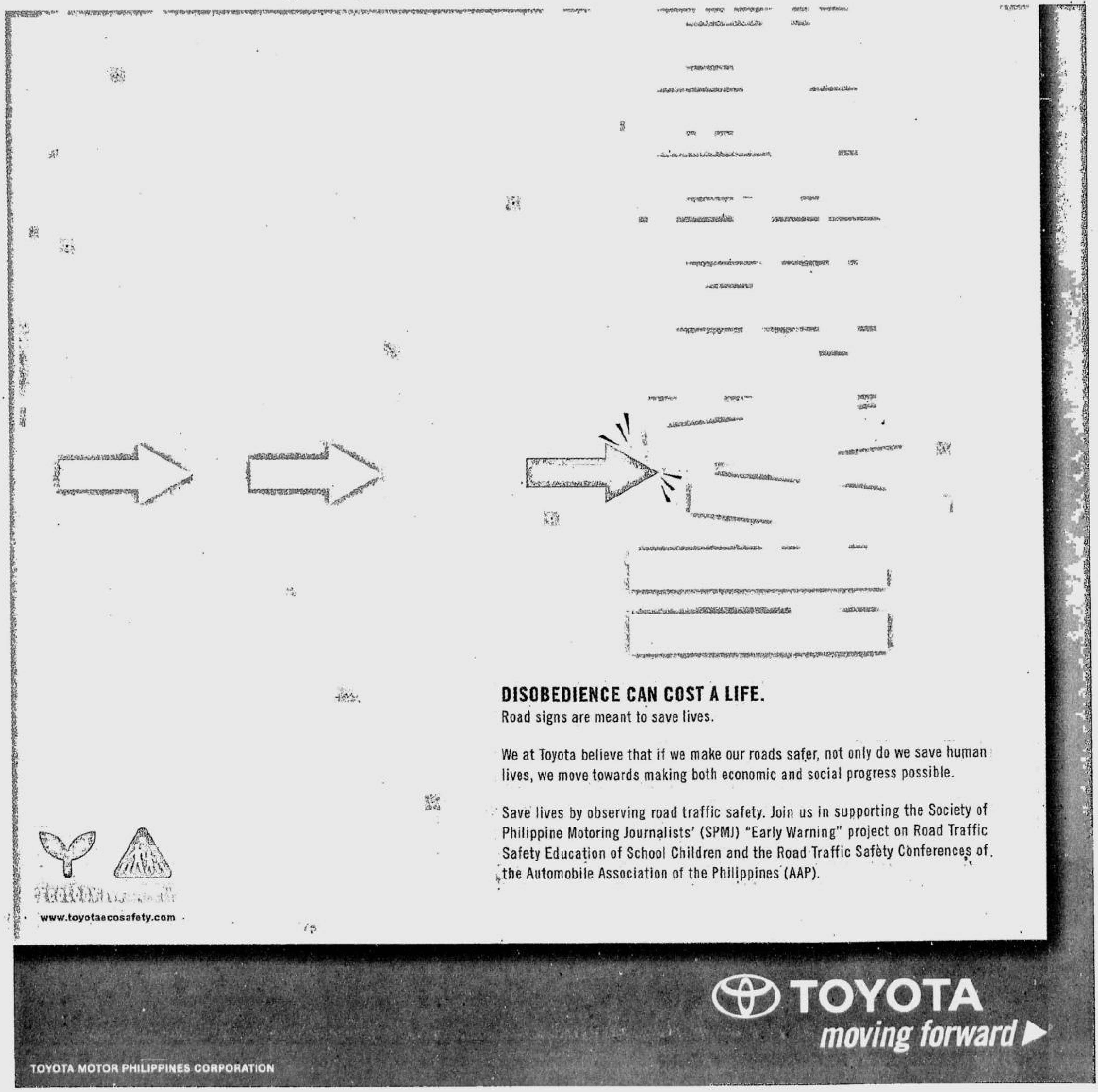

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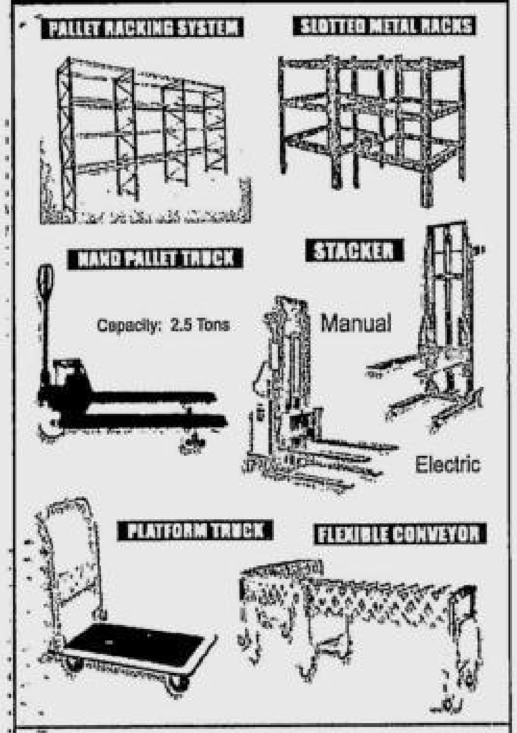

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Stocks ... From page B1

index gain to 5.2 percent in the last four sessions.

"Positive fundamentals, plus the result of the treasury bill auction yesterday, and the market setting a new 10-year high, all of those things helped boost the market," said AB Capital Securities research director Jose Vistan.

Blue chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was the most actively traded, rising 4.6 percent to P2,720 on heavy volume, boosted by the 0.9-percent gain in the company's American depositary receipts Monday.

Property and banking stocks also dominated trading following Monday's treasury auction, which saw benchmark yields hitting new record lows. The low interest rate environment is expected to stoke property demand and encourage bank lending.

SM Prime rose 4.4 percent to P12, while Bank of the Philippine Islands was up 0.7 percent at P70.50.

The market advance, however, wasn't broad based, with decliners leading advancers 64 to 53, as some investors cashed in on gains the market has piled up in the last four trading days. There were 54 stocks unchanged. *AP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 23, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS			
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7	7	7	7	20,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	48	48	47	47	2,429,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69.5	70.5	69.5	70.5	2,670,400
China Banking Corp.	690	700	690	700	3,170
Citystate Savings Bank	19.25	19.75	19.25	19.75	2,800
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.48	2,590,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	84	84	83.5	84	88,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	58.5	59	58	59	4,519,900
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	49	49	49	49	200
Philippine National Bank	49.5	50	49	49.5	207,000
Phil. Savings Bank	48.5	49	48.5	49	2,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	34.5	38	34.5	37	1,335,400
Security Bank Corp.	70	74	70	74	195,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	59.5	59.5	59	59	46,700
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.68	300,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	4.8	4.85	4.8	4.8	200,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	5,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1630	1630	1630	1630	390
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	422,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	300	347.5	300	345	17,420
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2030	2045	2020	2045	1,940
Ivantage Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	1,731,000
		INDUSTRIAL			
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.2	5.2	4.95	5	69,380,000
First Gen Corp.	55.5	56	55	55	1,237,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	72	73	72	72	1,276,100
Manila Electric Co. A	66	67.5	66	66.5	319,700
Manila Electric Co. B	67	68.5	66.5	68	1,518,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.2	9.2	9.1	9.2	1,236,000
Petron Corp.	4.15	4.2	4.15	4.2	5,658,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	310,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	20,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.26	1.26	1.2	1.22	2,727,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	53,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	15,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	43.5	44	43.5	44	448,700
RFM Corp.	1.28	1.32	1.28	1.3	1,367,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	70,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	190,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	63.5	63	63.5	32,000
San Miguel Corp. B	75	75	74.5	75	142,900
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	10,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.14	2.14	2.1	2.1	1,423,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.75	19	18.75	19	1,760,500
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Southeast Asian Cement	1.28	1.28	1.2	1.24	21,369,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.25	4.25	4.15	4.15	1,185,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.3	8.5	8.2	8.3	4,135,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	6	6	50,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.7	4.9	4.7	4.9	332,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5	4.95	5	5,496,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	110,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.77	0.78	0.75	0.76	59,440,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	6,430,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	30,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	10,000,000
Ayala Corp.	590	605	590	600	66,460
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	350,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	9.1	9.2	9.1	9.2	977,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0775	0.0775	0.075	0.075	49,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3	3	2.95	2.95	281,000
APC Group Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	8,380,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	19,400,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.16	1.06	1.1	53,518,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.62	1.62	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	50,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	6,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.65	2.7	2.65	2.65	42,940,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.2	7.3	525,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.8	2,256,000
House Of Investments Inc.	2.65	2.7	2.5	2.5	110,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	13.25	12.25	12.75	3,575,100
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	320,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	100,000
Magnum Holdings Inc	4.95	5.4	4.95	5.1	6,267,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.06	2.06	1.98	2	1,172,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	40,100,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	500,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.73	1,230,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	5,920,000
SM Investments Corp.	350	360	350	350	255,160
South China Resources Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	100,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.7	1.72	271,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	3,820,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	16.5	16.75	16.25	16.5	3,311,400
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	70,000
Belle Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.2	1.22	2,717,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.86	1.94	1.82	1.82	6,471,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	50,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.48	5,880,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.45	205,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	106,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	40,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	640,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.18	0.2	260,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.69	0.7	21,630,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	330,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	3,100,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	1,800,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.205	0.205	0.19	0.19	470,000
Interport Res.	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	58,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	50,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.53	0.53	0.5	0.5	10,270,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc	0.85	0.85	0.81	0.81	1,650,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.36	2.38	2.32	2.34	45,914,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	399,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	1,000,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	25,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	15	15	14.75	15	1,023,200
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.69	0.69	0.65	0.65	31,920,000
SM Development Corp.	3.35	3.4	3.3	3.35	1,627,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.75	12	11.75	12	19,364,200
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	500,000
		SERVICE			
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20.75	20.75	20.5	20.5	68,700
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	10,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2	2.02	1.96	2.02	9,021,000
Globe Telecom Inc	1290	1310	1285	1285	52,860
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.8	8,334,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2600	2725	2600	2720	328,810
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.31	0.28	0.31	64,910,000
Imperial Res	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	30,800,000
Ionics Inc.	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.55	1,036,000
IPVG Corp.	4	4	4	4	128,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0575	0.0625	0.0575	0.06	9,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	28,400,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	140,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.42	2.65	2.42	2.46	1,604,000
Philweb Corp.	0.036	0.037	0.034	0.035	1,349,100,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.7	65,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	23.5	24	23.5	24	557,200
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	20,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	6,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.06	2.06	1,159,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	1,040,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	940,000
		EDUCATION			
Centro Escolar University	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	10,000
iPeople Inc.	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.3	54,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	5,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.1	2.16	2.1	2.12	597,000
Paxys Inc.	21.25	22	21.25	21.75	531,800
Philippine Seven Corp.	3.45	4	3.45	4	16,000
		MINING			
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	4.9	5.3	4.9	5.2	1,565,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	4.9	5.3	4.85	5.2	1,057,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	95,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.2	9.2	9	9	949,000
Benguet Corp. A	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	30,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.5	2.8	2.5	2.55	9,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	21,980,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,740,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.026	825,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.03	0.029	0.029	684,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	210,900,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.75	4	3.75	3.9	16,607,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	15	15	14.75	14.75	232,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.69	590,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.68	1.68	1.64	1.66	4,951,000
		OIL			
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	3,170,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	163,600,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	92,700,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.1	1.14	1.1	1.12	5,388,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.1	1.14	1.1	1.12	1,379,000
PNOC Exploration Corp.-B	24	24	24	24	3,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	138,000

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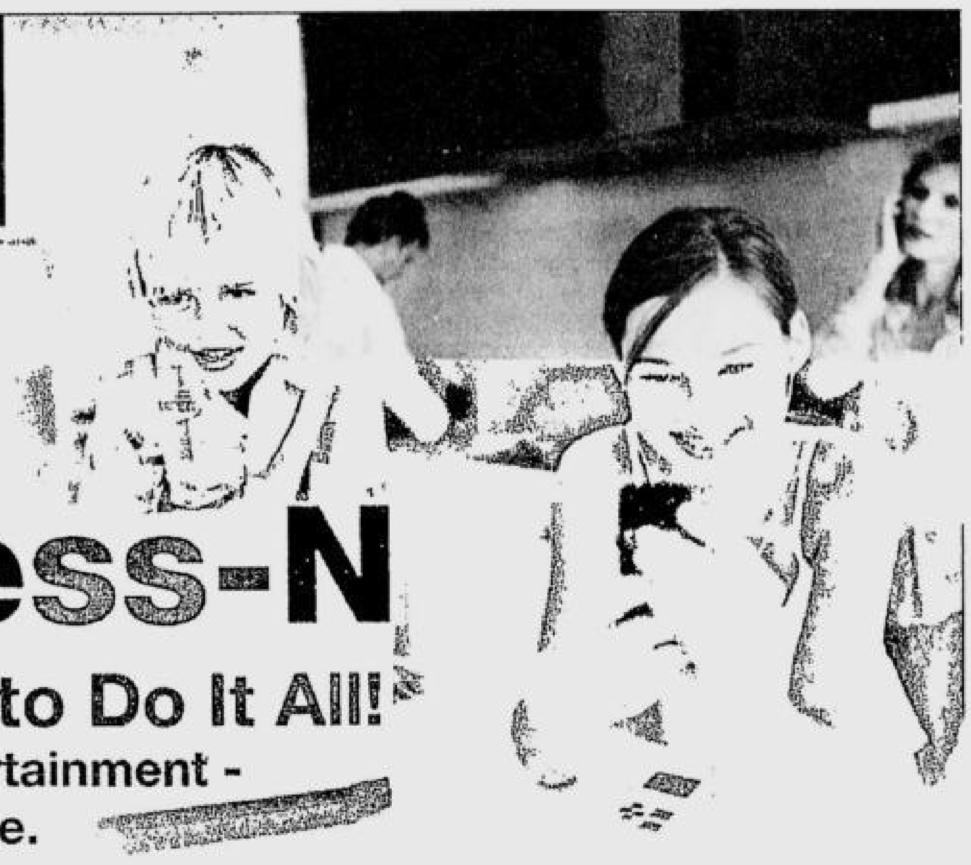

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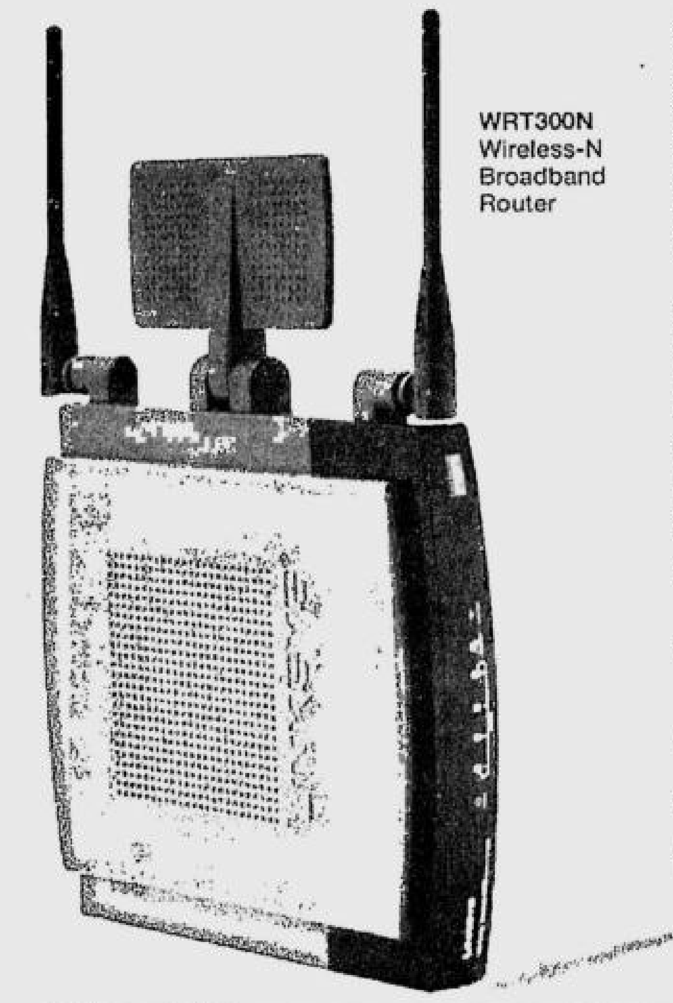

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SEC okays PAL backdoor listing

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COUNTRY'S TOP CORPORATE REGULAtor has given its approval to a backdoor listing of Philippine Airlines (PAL) via a holding firm owned by tobacco and beer magnate Lucio C. Tan.

In a statement, the Philippine Stock Exchange said that the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has approved the change of corporate name of Baguio Gold Holdings Corp. into PAL Holdings Inc.

According to the statement, the SEC also approved the increase in the firm's capital stock from P400 million to P20 billion, divided into 20 billion shares with a par value of P1.

Both approvals have effectively made PAL, the country's biggest airline and flag carrier, a listed company on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Last year, Baguio Gold announced that it would pay P136 million, or P1 a share, for 82 percent of PAL shares within a year from the date of acquisition of those shares.

The newly formed PAL Holdings has now assumed the debts of six holding companies in Tan's group that own 82 percent of PAL, namely Ascot Holdings Inc., Pol Holdings Inc., Cube Factor Holdings Inc., Sierra Holdings and Equities Inc., Network Holdings and Equities Inc. and Maxell Holdings Corp.

According to their latest available financial statements, the holding companies had liabilities ranging from P640 million to P3 billion.

Under the scheme, PAL Holdings would issue shares of its stock to the creditors of the six holding companies, effectively making it a debt-for-equity swap.

The six companies' major creditor is Trustmark Holdings Corp., another Tan company, which owned 69 percent of Baguio Gold.

PAL has reported a net income of $29 million in the fiscal year ended on March 31, up 63 percent from the previous fiscal year.

For the present fiscal year, ending 2007, PAL said it expected its profit to drop to $18 million because of increased fuel costs.

Foreign . . .

From page B1

percent increase to $1.96 billion in the net inflow of foreign direct investments reported from January to October 2006.

JFC members include the American, Australia-New Zealand, Canadian, European, Japanese and Korean chambers and the Philippine Association of Multinational Companies Regional Headquarters.

"The recovery of FDI in the country is extremely encouraging and reflects the strong economic growth of the world's major economies and the record flow of FDI into Asia as well as (Southeast Asia)," JFC said in a statement.

"Complete data for 2006 will not be available for several months, but it appears the Philippines is receiving about 5 percent of total FDI (among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), which approached $40 billion last year," the group added.

JFC said investors have begun to recognize and reward the positive economic news coming from the Philippines, including a decreasing public sector deficit, improving government revenues, steady GDP growth, low inflation, a strengthening peso and planned spending on infrastructure and education.

The group said up to $9 billion a year in FDI could possibly flow into the country if the investment climate, labor quality and physical infrastructure continued to improve.

These investments, if realized, would generate more than 2.9 million direct and indirect jobs annually from 2007 to 2010.

The JFC organized and hosted last October an FDI workshop aimed at finding out how the Philippines could attract $3 billion in FDI each year.

Budget . . .

From page B1

would hit P1.144 trillion.

With the ceiling for expenditures for 2007 set at P1.183 trillion by fiscal authorities, Bear Stearns said, the budget deficit would therefore hit only P39 billion.

A P39-billion budget deficit for this year would be much lower than the P63-billion deficit ceiling under the government's fiscal program for this year. A P39-billion deficit would also be a significant improvement from the estimated P62-billion deficit for 2006.

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*Quoted rates are subject to change without prior notice.
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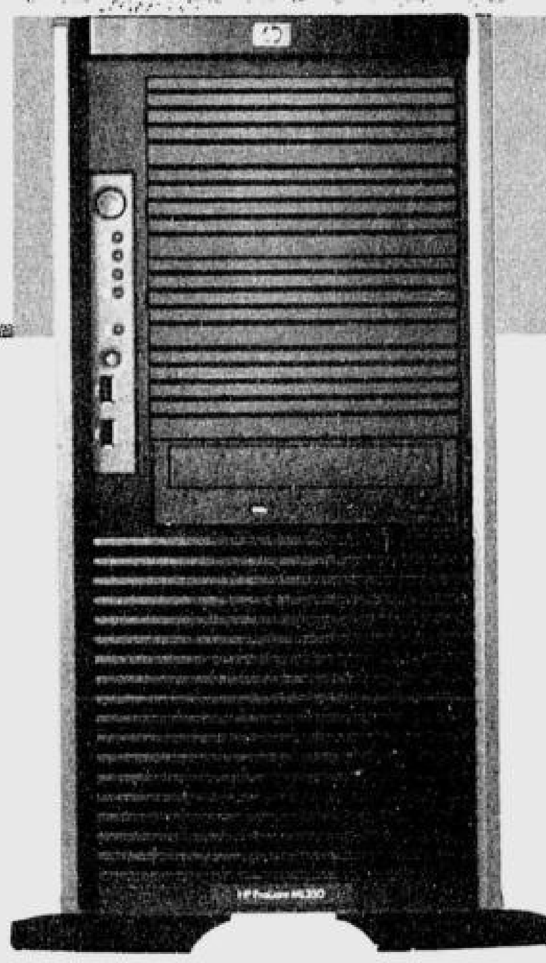

Maximize your investment with the HP ProLiant ML350 G5 server, powered by the Dual-Core Intel® Xeon® Processor. This HP ProLiant ML350 G5 server, the best selling tower server in the world, is all new for its fifth generation with remarkable improvements to reliability, expandability, environmental, and performance features. Build the right infrastructure for your IT with these HP ProLiant servers. You'll also get the best investment protection, thanks to Integrated Lights Out 2 firmware that optimizes remote management and virtually eliminates the need for onsite assistance. And from January 8 to January 31, 2007, get a FREE HP iPAQ rw6828 Pocket PC and gift for every Intel Processor-based HP ProLiant 300 Series bundle you buy in the Big Bang ProLiant promo.

P190,000 HP PROLIANT DL360 G5
- (1) Dual-Core Intel® Xeon® Processor 5120* (1.86GHz, 1066 MHz FSB)
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- Smart Array E200i SAS RAID Controller with 64MB cache (RAID 0/1)
- (2) HP 72GB 10K SAS 2.5 Hot Plug Hard Drives
- FREE HP iPAQ rw6828 Pocket PC worth P39,950

P255,000 HP PROLIANT DL380 G5
- (1) Dual-Core Intel® Xeon® Processor 5130* (2GHz, 1333 MHz FSB)
- 2 GB (2 x 1 GB) PC2-5300 Fully Buffered DIMMs (DDR2-667) with Advanced ECC, mirrored and online spare memory capabilities
- Embedded Dual NC373i Multifunction Gigabit NICs
- Smart Array P400 Controller with 256MB cache (RAID 0/1/5)
- (2) HP 72GB 10K SAS 2.5 Hot Plug Hard Drives
- FREE HP iPAQ rw6828 Pocket PC worth P39,950

P180,000 HP PROLIANT ML350 G5
- (1) Dual-Core Intel® Xeon® Processor 5130* (2GHz, 1333 MHz FSB)
- 1 GB (2 x 512 MB) Standard; PC2-5300 Fully Buffered DIMMs (DDR2-667)
- Embedded Single NC373i Multifunction Gigabit NIC
- Smart Array E200i SAS RAID Controller with 128MB and BBWC
- (2) HP 72GB 10K SAS 2.5 Hot Plug Hard Drives
- FREE HP iPAQ rw6828 Pocket PC worth P39,950

P255,000 HP PROLIANT ML370 G5
- (1) Dual-Core Intel® Xeon® Processor 5140* (2.33 GHz, 1333 MHz FSB) 65 Watts
- 2 GB PC2-5300 Fully Buffered DIMMs (DDR2-667)
- Embedded Dual NC373i Multifunction Gigabit NICs
- HP Smart Array P400/256MB Controller (RAID 0/1/5)
- (2) HP 72GB 10K SAS 2.5 Hot Plug Hard Drives
- FREE HP iPAQ rw6828 Pocket PC worth P39,950

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1. From January 8 to January 31, 2007, buy participating Big Bang ProLiant bundles at specified price and get a FREE HP iPAQ rw6828 Pocket PC. Plus, get to choose one gift from the following choices of gifts:
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   - 1GB MP3 Player OR
   - Hi-fi computer speakers
2. Visit www.iloveproliant.com.ph for more details.

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DUBAI DRYDOCKS is a leading ship repair/conversions and new building yard with three very large graving docks, a panamax size floating dock and extensive workshop facilities. The company commenced operations in 1983 and currently employs approximately 8,500 multi-national employees from 30 countries. Presently within the company's Production Division, vacancies exists for:

WORK PREPARATORS

As a member of the Pipe Department team the successful candidate will be expected to have knowledge of different drafting/Design software AutoCAD and other software like PDS, Tribon or equivalent piping software is desirable. The role demands familiarity with the Classification Society rules or IACS for marine piping construction / design and the piping materials international standard comparison and materials alternatives is desirable. The ideal candidate should have a technical education or qualification from a recognized institution with a minimum 5 years experience preferably in major shipbuilding / repair yard or oil & gas industries as a Piping draughtsman.

FOREMEN-PIPE FABRICATION

As a member of the Pipe Department team the role demands basic knowledge on marine piping system, ASME B31.3 and associated piping classification code and standard. The successful candidate will also be expected to have a reasonable knowledge with the Classification Society rules or IACS for marine piping construction / design and be conversant with recognized safe working standard and practices; quality work standard. The ideal candidate should have a technical education or qualification from a recognized institution with a minimum 5 years experience in major shipbuilding / repair yard or oil & gas industries as a Piping Foreman or Leadman. This role also demands the ability to manage the assigned tasks independently with minimum supervision as well to manage a team of multiple nationality workforces.

FOREMAN- PIPE WELDING

As a member of the Pipe Department team the successful candidate will have basic knowledge on welding on different piping materials, related welding procedures and NDT and inspection procedures like Visual inspection, MPI & DPT .The role demands familiarity with the ASME Section IX and AWS requirements for pipe welding including awareness of procedures relating to handling welding consumables and heat treatment. The ideal candidate must have a strong background as a SMAW and GTAW 6G welder and be fully conversant with recognized safe working standard and practices; quality standards. The ideal candidate should have a technical education or qualification from a recognized institution with a minimum 5 years experience in major shipbuilding / repair yard or oil & gas industries as a Welding Foreman or Leadman.

We offer an attractive employment package, including a competitive salary (currently tax-free) depending on the experience of the individual, overtime as applicable, free medical, to & fro travel, accommodation with recreation facilities and designated Filipino mess hall. The employer's representative will be present for WALK-IN interview in the following locations as per schedule given below

- **Manila 28th, 29th & 30th January 2007**
- **Olongapo 1st, 2nd & 3rd February 2007**
- **Cebu 5th, 6th & 7th February 2007**

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Phone : **0063 2 532 5035**
Fax : **0063 2 532 5042**

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12 Marunong Street, Barangay Central
Quezon City
e-mail : **celestial@speed.info.com.ph**
Phone : **0063 2 928 8389**
Fax : **0063 2 928 8479**

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5282

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND REBID/BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

	Approved Budget
4 pcs. of 10" x 600S Expanding Gate Valves under *FGT 64555*	PHP 3,943,000.00
Various Sizes of Expanding Gate Valves under *FGC 61703*	PHP 2,976,500.00
56 pcs. of 15 kVA Step-Down Transformers under *FGJ 60702*	PHP 3,000,000.00
Various Sizes of CS Seamless Pipes under *FGJ 60707*	PHP 6,500,000.00
Various Sizes of Through Conduit Valves under *FGJ 60715*	PHP 3,100,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Ms. Maria Cristina Lynn M. Mercado** starting January 24, 2007 and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on January 25, 2007 for FGT 64555, January 26, 2007 for FGC 61703, January 31, 2007 for FGJ 60702, and February 1, 2007 for FGJ 60707 and FGJ 60715, 2:00 P.M. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Wall Clock Time) of February 1, 2007 for FGT 64555, February 2, 2007 for FGC 61703, February 14, 2007 for FGJ 60702, and February 15, 2007 for FGJ 60707 and FGJ 60715. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Jan. 24, 2007)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time		Non-Refundable Fee
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1 Lot Supply, Delivery and Installation of Systems Furniture at LBP Lipa Office Building	P3,400,000.00	February 1, 2007 10:00 AM	February 14, 2007 1:00 PM	P 1,700.00
6,400 Boxes Statement of Account, Size: 8-1/2" x 9-1/2". Stock: GSP-70 gsm (+/-5% Tolerance), Bookpaper Quality	P3,190,400.00	February 1, 2007 2:00 PM	February 14, 2007 1:00 PM	P 1,600.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the Procurement Department (ProD) starting January 24, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at ProD Conference Room, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila.

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes placed in single outer envelope and sealed accordingly in the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the ProD-Requisitions Management Division at telephone no. 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

(PDI-Jan. 24, 2007)
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

BICOL UNIVERSITY

Legazpi City

REPUBLICATION OF THE NOTICE OF SEARCH FOR THE NEW UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT AND EXTENDING THE DEADLINE OF SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

By virtue of Referendum No. 01, series of 2007, the Bicol University Board of Regents has authorized the re-publication of the **Notice of Search for the New Bicol University President** and at the same time extending the deadline of submission of pertinent documents evidencing compliance with the following requirements to **February 14, 2007:**

Applicants must possess the following qualifications:

1. Must be a Filipino citizen
2. Preferably a holder of an earned doctoral degree
3. Preferably not more than sixty (60) years old at the time of application
4. At least five (5) years of relevant managerial and administrative experience
5. Morally upright
6. Has not been convicted by final judgment of any crime involving moral turpitude
7. Proven capability in resource generation and networking
8. Experience or involvement in community service

Required clearances, where applicable:

1. Ombudsman
2. Civil Service Commission
3. National Bureau of Investigation
4. Regional Trial Court
5. Provincial Prosecutor's Office
   N.B. While the 1st two (2) clearances are required only from applicants who are already in government service, all applicants both from the government and private sectors must submit the last three (3).

Application/Nomination should be accompanied by:

1. Detailed Curriculum Vitaé and documentary evidences supportive of qualifications.
2. Statement of Vision, Mission and Thrusts for Bicol University
3. Medical Clearance that include results of drug test
4. Result of Neuro-Psychiatric Examination in a sealed envelope

Deadline of submission is extended to February 14, 2007

Submit applications including credentials with duly certified supporting documents in five sets to:

THE CHAIRPERSON
Search Committee for the BU Presidency
c/o Dr. Milagros S. Esparrago
Commission on Higher Education
Regional Office 5
EM's Barrio-South
Barangay 2
Legazpi City

or, to:

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER NENALYN P. DEFENSOR
c/o Ms. Jennilyn M. Salubayba
Commisson on Higher Education
5th Floor, DAP Building San Miguel Avenue
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LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Addendum to the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the Line 1 North Extension Project

The **Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA)**, through its **Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC)** further announces to the public that Quality-Cost Evaluation Procedure shall be used in the appreciation of the technical and financial proposal of the bidders.

All bidders shall be required to submit their technical and financial proposals simultaneously in separate sealed envelopes. The technical proposals together with the financial proposals shall be considered in the evaluation of the bids.

For this purpose, the financial and technical proposals shall be given corresponding weights at **FORTY (40%) PERCENT** and **SIXTY (60%) PERCENT**, respectively, comprising a total of One Hundred percent (100%).

(Sgd.) **LT COL CESAR B CHAVEZ, PN (M) (R)**
Chairman
Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC)

(PDI–Jan. 24, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Meralco Avenue, DepED Complex, Pasig City
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Physical Facilities and Schools Engineering Division (PFSED) of the Department of Education (DepED), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective bidders to submit Letter of Intent (LOI), apply for eligibility and if found eligible to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	**Restoration of Heritage Building (Roxas Hall) at Teacher's Camp, Baguio City**
Location	**Teacher's Camp, Baguio City**
Approved Budget for the Contract	**Php12,000,000.00**
Indicative Contract Duration	**180 Calendar Days**

Bids received that exceed the ABC shall be rejected

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed similar civil works (vertical construction) largest single contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, experience or completed contract(s) in restoration of historical or heritage building(s) and key personnel and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check and Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particular relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR)

The Schedule of BAC activities are as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1 Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) and Application for Eligibility, and Issuance of Eligibility Documents	January 24 - February 5, 2007
2. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	January 24 - February 6, 2007
3. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	February 7, 2007
4. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 7-14, 2007
5. Pre-bid Conference Venue :LCC Conference Room, Rm. 413-B Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City	February 15, 2007 - 10:00 AM
6. Receipt and Opening of Bids Venue :Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal I Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City	February 27, 2007 - 10:00 AM

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders the Eligibility Documents at **Procurement Service, BAC Secretariat, Rm. 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City** upon submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) and payment in cash of a non-refundable amount of **Philippine Pesos Five Hundred and 00/100 only (Php500.00)**. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address. BAC activities Nos. 1-4 shall be conducted at 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during DepED working days only.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC eligible to bid upon payment in cash of a non-refundable amount of **Philippine Pesos Five Thousand and 00/00 only (Php5,000.00)**. The BAC Secretariat could be reached through Tel. No. (02) 633-9343 or Fax No. (02) 636-6543. Information is also available at **http://www.deped.gov.ph** or **www.procurementservice.org**.

The Purchaser assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of the bid. Likewise, the Purchaser reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) TEODOSIO C. SANGIL, JR.
Undersecretary and BAC Vice Chairman

(PDI - Jan. 24, 2007)

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS
dti

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **MEGASCRIBE SERVICES INCORPORATED** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as **New IT Export Service Firm in the field of Medical Transcription** on a **Non-Pioneer** Status with project/plant site located at **745 Aurora Boulevard, Barangay Mariana, New Manila, Quezon City.**

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration
Department

(PDI – January 24, 2007)

ERRATUM

In the **NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S** of the **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE-NCR)** published in this paper on Dec. 29, 2006, the names of the following foreign nationals were inadvertently printed:

Philip Ficarelli of JT Success Trading Incorporated
Randy Lee Teck Hien of Trisilco Folec Phils., Inc.

Our apologies.

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that the Amended Articles of Incorporation of **PEARL ASIA APPAREL CORPORATION** shortening the term of existence up to 31 January 2007 thereby dissolving the said corporation on said date have been approved by the Board of Directors.

All persons having claims against said corporation are requested to present the same at the 868 Champaca Road Extension UPS IV Subd., Km. 19 South Super Hi-way, Parañaque City for immediate settlement.

This announcement will serve as notice to all concerned of the legal dissolution of the aforesaid corporation.

(Sgd.) **Joselito John G. Blando**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI--Jan. 17, 24 & 31, 2007)

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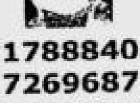

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The Officers and Staff
of the
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL TRADING CORPORATION (PITC)
and
PITC PHARMA, INC.

condole with the family of

ROBERTO RAYMOND OBLEFIAS PAGDANGANAN

Son of their Chairman and President
SECRETARY ROBERTO M. PAGDANGANAN

who peacefully joined his Creator on Sunday, January 21, 2007 at the age of 27.

His remains lie in state at the Sta. Maria Della Strada Parish, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City and will be transferred after an 8:00 a.m. mass on Wednesday, January 24, 2007 to the Sto. Niño Chapel in Calumpit, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Sunday, January 28, 2007 at the Calumpit Memorial Park in Bulacan.

For your Classified Ads requirements:

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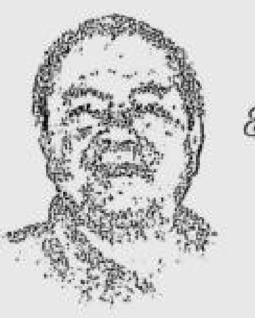
811-4370

KALAW:
528-0213;
527-3342

MEGAMALL:
635-0219;
635-0220



Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.
My life's been full, I savored much,
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your heart and share with me,
God wanted me now, He set me free ...

AGM ISRAEL G. ESTRELLA

24 January 1943 - 10 November 2006

We, the family of the late **Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office - AGM Israel "Dick" Estrella:**

Wife : **Erlinda B. Estrella**
Children : **Lumin & Vic,**
Israel Earl & Tess,
Erly
Grandchildren : **Vince, Exequiel, Rhea Lynn,**
Luvic & Elbert
Siblings : **Loly, Laura, Clemen,**
Leyte & Linda

Express our heartfelt gratitude for your support, prayers & comforting words as we fondly remember him on his 64th birthday.

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul."
Psalm 23: 1-3

Atty. Zosima Castillo Hernandez

Lemery, Batangas

peacefully joined her Creator on January 21, 2007.

Her remains lie in state at her Residence.
Interment will be announced later.

In Loving Memory
5th Death Anniversary

PAZ "PACHING" GRUET GARCIA

The following Masses will be celebrated today January 24, 2007.

Convent of Perpetual Adoration, Hemady St., Q.C.	6:00 AM
Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, Mandaluyong	7:15 AM
Mary The Queen, Greenhills, Mandaluyong	6:00 PM
Christ The King, E. Rodriguez, Q.C.	6:00 PM
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, New Manila, Q.C.	6:00 PM
Most Holy Redeemer Parish, Brixton Hill, Q.C.	6:30 PM

The family requests the pious readers to pray for her eternal peace and happiness.

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS

Mandaluyong branch is open to serve your Classified Ads requirements.

MANDALUYONG BRANCH
SM MEGAMALL 5TH LEVEL, BLDG B, EDSA
TEL. NO.: 635-0219 / 637-2008
Contact Persons:
Joy, Arnold, Arnel & Vincent

ATTY. JOSE F. MIRAVITE

Died at Fairfield, CA on November 8, 2006 at the age of 73.

He is survived by his wife, **Amparo Gobencion Miravite**; children **Mario & Judith, Luis, Zack & Cynthia, Mayang** and **Monching, Budoy, Malou** and **Ricky, Joey** and **Maribel**; grandchildren & siblings **Naty, Tita, Inday, Dely, Bon** and **Zack Jr.**

Relatives and friends are invited to join his family at a Requiem Mass at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 27, 2007 at the Twin Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish, Bulletin St., West Triangle, Quezon City, after which his cremated remains will be entombed.

Our Dearly Beloved

EDGAR "BOY" INOVEJAS ISIDRO

City Administrator, Calbayog City

Peacefully joined our Lord Jesus and the Blessed Mother on January 16, 2007.

His loving mother **Lucia I. Isidro**; loving sisters & brothers-in-law: **Erlie & Jun Domingo, Emilie & Jun Andrada, Babie & Charlie Spiteri,** and **Eva & Bob Costello;** nephews & nieces: **Alain & Sheela, Patricia, Julie, Bruce & Lynlyn, Lilybelle & Ryan, and Maricel;** grandniece **Wednesday** and grandnephews **Luis & JR;** relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the **Isidro Residence, Barangay Capoocan, Calbayog City, Samar.**

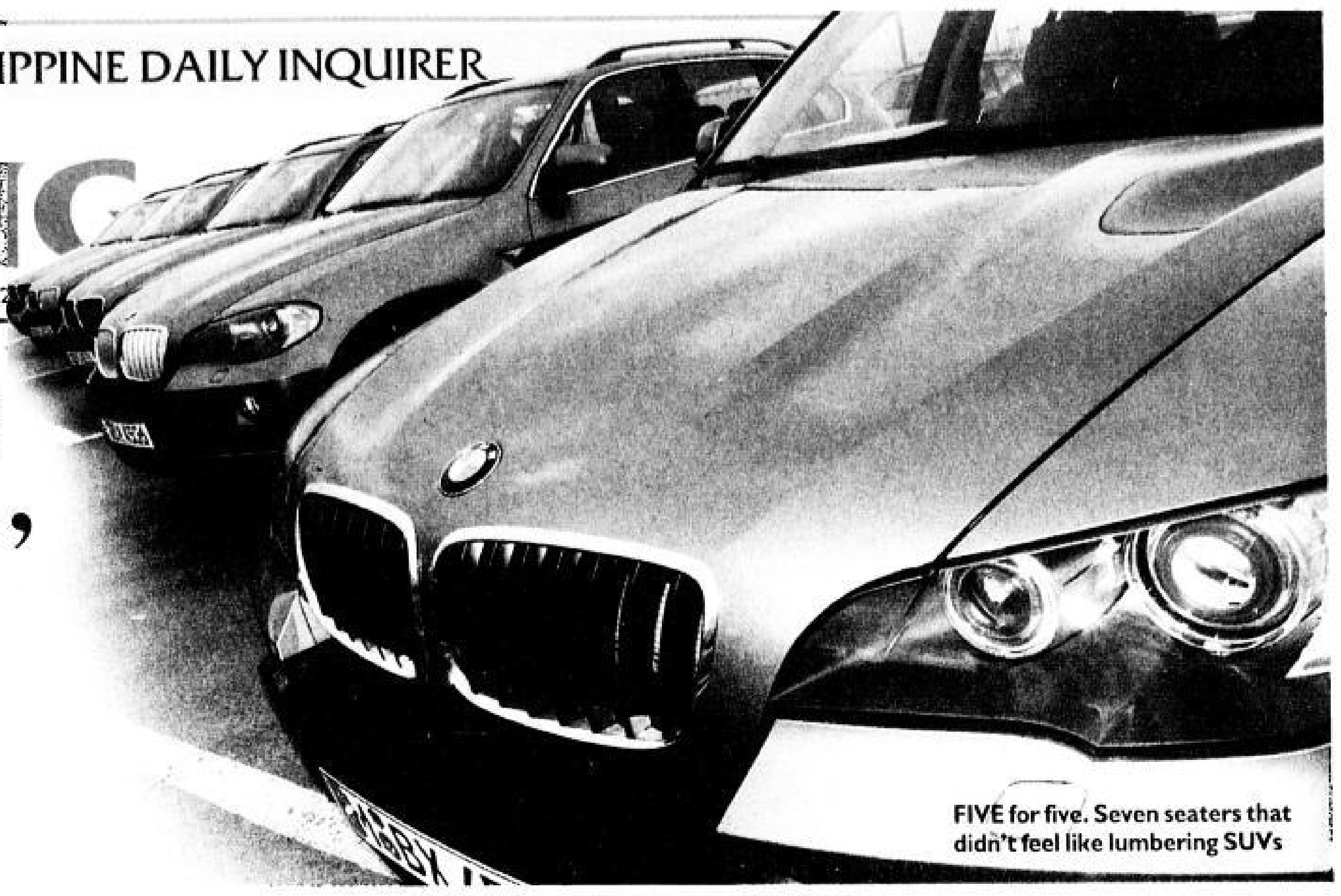
Interment will be on **Thursday, January 25, 2007** at the **Calbayog Memorial Park.**

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

MOTORING

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang** **Text us your feedback:** inquirer mtr name/age/city/message to

'Helen, the horse just grew bigger'



FIVE for five. Seven seaters that didn't feel like lumbering SUVs

Text and photos by Tessa R. Salazar

BMW brings its own 'Trojan horse' to Greece. Inquirer Motoring, of course, rode with the troops inside all the way

(Second of three parts)

UNLIKE WHAT THE early Greeks did to Troy, the Germans at BMW didn't come here to lay siege to this amazing, ancient nation. Instead, BMW offers a further evolved version of the X5—a thoroughbred that defies the confines of conventional SUVs. And, of course, this is reserved only for those who can afford it.

The price to pay for such a piece of craftsmanship? In pesos, the figures are still under wraps. Suffice to say the next X5 could fetch a little more than its predecessor.

No more surprises

On actual road tests, the X5 didn't hold any more surprises. As expected, it satisfied the cravings of speed junkies on the Greek highways and negotiated the tricky thoroughfares in Attica, a peninsula jutting into the Aegean Sea, like it lived there all its life. On paper, the X5 could accelerate from 0 to 100 kph in 6.5 seconds. And a 0.33 drag coefficient let's you stay up to speed without stepping constantly on the pedal—a quality unusual for a large SUV (folks at BMW refuse the SUV title; they prefer their play toy named SAV, or sport activity vehicle). Nearest SUV competitors available locally manage only a 0.34 to 0.39 drag coefficient.

It boasts of a six-speed automatic tranny that's supposed to shift 50 percent faster, and stylish ergonomics that feature a new electronic gear selector lever. Direct connection of the transmission to the engine enhanced the acceleration. So you now know why BMW insists on calling its new X5 an SAV.

There's even an option to activate a manual gearshift, just push the lever to the left, then you can shift gears sequentially, pulling the lever back to shift up and pressing it forward to shift down. A torque converter even enables you to avoid power wastage.

X5 fans started raving about the vehicle's BMW sports sedan-like drive capabilities as far back as seven years ago. At first glance, this second edition X5 doesn't look like a radical departure from the original. The body doesn't look larger than its predecessor. But it presents itself with a more commanding—and inviting—presence with its roomier interior.

Clear and focused

The joints on the engine compartment lid move together more closely than before at the front, merging into the contour lines around the headlights, where they continue into the surface contours of the headlight lenses.

The dual round headlights cut off at the top, which, in turn, create the impression of a particularly clear and focused look, underlining the forward moving character of the X5 through the design of the front section alone. There are horizontal lines to stress the performance of the X5 and stretched side section to show larger dimensions inside.

THE LONG and winding road that leads to five doors

The double kidney grill design is also new; the robust kidney rods curved out like a muscle to demonstrate the power and strength of the vehicle. The slender, black covers around the bumper and side sills lend a lighter, more agile look.

With its larger exterior dimensions, the new X5 is now wider and longer with a low center of gravity. BMW engineers have avoided any significant increases in weight for the new model.

The new X5 is longer by 18.7 cm and wider by 6.1 cm than its predecessor. It is now fitted with optional third row seats, and its second row seats have 1.6 inches more knee room. The loading compartment is now 10 cm, almost four inches, longer than before.

So it now has space for up to seven occupants, but the two optional seats at the rear are good only for passengers up to 1.7 meters or 5'7" in height. This writer thinks the two additional seats are good only for adults on short ride and comfy for kids on long haul. Nevertheless, this is a nifty option as you can choose to haul seven persons, or you can choose to load five persons and carry bulky equipment at the back, instead.

Entrance, exit

This writer, wearing heels, jeans, and then in a dress, didn't encounter any problems alighting from and entering the vehicle even at the third row seats. The third row seats for two, though, felt a bit too low to see the view up front. Your "li'l kings and queens" might need cinema plastic booster seats for this spot.

Worth noting is the driver's seat that, even for this diminutive driver, still offered a significant ride height and a commanding seating position.

The Heads-Up Display, multi-channel audio system, and a DVD video system and backup camera are optional features.

The steering was fun as we frolicked on the mountainous and winding narrow paths and on wide roads, holding our own against speed demon motorists. To provide the extra space and not sacrifice stability for this new X5, lightweight materials and the geometry of load-bearing elements were focused upon. For instance, the new X5's torsional stiffness compared to the former model is up by 15 percent from 23,500 to 27,000 Nm/degree.

The wheelbase is now higher by 11.3 cm, which engineers explain as helping provide a new visual balance of the front and rear sections, accentuating the overall look of the new X5 in its agility even more than on the former model.

It now has both the Active Steering and xDrive in the new X5 and more powerful engines.

Ford's long-term bet on ethanol

Text and photo by Charles E. Buban

SPECIAL REPORT

(Conclusion)

OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS, FORD has put more than one million flexible fuel vehicles—those which are capable of running on anything from straight unleaded gasoline to one that is blended with ethanol—on the road in the United States, Brazil and in the European Union.

Although the Philippines only recently welcomed the arrival of the first FFVs in the market, the Ford Focus 2.0L Sport and 1.8L, which are capable of accepting gasoline or its mix of up to 20 percent blend of ethanol (E20), Ford's ethanol project in the Philippines goes further back.

"There are many types of alternative fuel types that are currently being investigated—use of electricity and hydrogen among others—and each has its advantages as well as disadvantages. Ford believes that each market should determine what type of alternative fuel would be the best to adopt, one that would make a sustainable impact in the long term," explained Val Valero of Ford Philippines Quality and Lean Manufacturing.

Best potential

Believing that ethanol would have the best potential in the Philippines, Ford invested in 2005 P1 billion to beef up its assembly plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna with a flexible fuel engine manufacturing facility, which incidentally is Ford's first flexible fuel facility in the region.

The facility, which is capable of producing 50,000 FFV engines and machined cylinder heads over the next five years will make the Philippines a leader in the flexible fuel technology in the region.

"The flexible fuel technology is part of Ford's global vision on innovation, and with this investment here in the Philippines, Ford intends to make the country as a center of excellence in flexible fuel technology in the Asean region," reported Valero in reference to the regional cooperative organization composed of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Aligned

The flexible fuel engine manufacturing facility is also aligned with the Philippines' alternative fuel program that seeks to reduce dependence on imported conventional fuel and promote a cleaner environment while potentially pushing agro-industrial investment in the rural areas through ethanol production.

And like the proverbial chicken or egg question, the success of ethanol in the Philippines rests on companies like Ford to put more FFVs on the road, be rewarded with incentives for doing so, and for the country to improve its ethanol infrastructure.

"There is no problem in sourcing ethanol in the Philippines since the most abundant farm crops in the country include sugarcane, cassava and corn—all primary sources of ethanol. For E10 to be made available nationwide, the Philippines would need at least 20 plants, 120,000 hectares of agricultural land as well as 120,000 employees. For the E20 on the other hand, the country would need at least 40 plants, 240,000 hectares of agricultural land as well as 240,000 farmer-employees," explained Bimbo Manzano, Ford Philippines product development engineer.

200,000 hectares identified

This early, the Department of Agriculture has identified some 200,000 hectares nationwide as possible new areas for expanding the country's sugarcane production and meet the expected demand for ethanol.

The department believes sugarcane would be the least costly in harvesting ethanol.

Interestingly, the P1.5-billion San Carlos Bioenergy Inc. ethanol and power plant in Negros Occidental is expected to begin operation this year. The 25-hectare plant will have the capacity to produce some 100,000 liters per day (or 30 million liters per year).

Best fit RP

"Ford believes that ethanol would best fit the Philippines because of the country's abundant supply of source crops as well as Ford's track record as a global leader in FFV technology," assured Hazel Ludovice, Ford Philippines marketing and communications manager.

She added that Ford's strategy for the Philippines is well aligned to its global direction on alternative fuel technologies.

Ludovice assured: "Here in the Philippines, we are confident that the newly launched Ford Focus FFVs, being the first E20-capable sedans, will pave the way in demonstrating Ford's leadership in alternative fuel technologies toward sustainable mobility."

PROUDLY Philippine-made cars that can run on either conventional gasoline or a combination of gasoline and bio-ethanol fuels will soon roll out Ford's assembly line in Laguna.

How to get a competition license

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

MOTOR SPORT IS ALIVE AND running in this country, thanks to 200 race drivers who each hold a competition license issued by Automobile Association Philippines (AAP), the Philippine affiliate of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). And thanks also to the groups that organize motor sport events.

The FIA, the governing body of motor sport worldwide including Formula One, the World Rally Championships, the Paris-Dakar rally and Le Mans, authorizes AAP to adapt FIA rules for motor sport events in this country and to issue competition licenses and organizing permits.

The motor sport disciplines in which drivers compete are karting, slalom, drag racing, AF3 (Asian Formula 3), rally cross, the national touring car championship and 4x4 off-road. The auto rally, which is conducted in stages cross-country over a number of days, has been dormant but may be revived later this year if plans of an organizer with AAP push through.

Licensed disciplines

AAP does not as yet issue competition licenses for drag racing and off-road, which have to undergo another year of observation by AAP before they can be officially recognized in this country as licensed motor sport disciplines. A motor sport that seeks official recognition from AAP has to undergo three years of observation. Thus hill-climbing, which will hold its first event under AAP observation this year, may be officially recognized as a licensed motor sport discipline in 2009.

If and when drag racing and off-roading are officially recognized by AAP, their participants will have to apply for a competition license. This should swell the number of drivers with competition licenses to about 500, since there are some 150 who regularly compete in drag races and another 100 in 4x4 off-road events. At present, the youngest driver with a competition license is 8 years old and the oldest is 59. Both are in karting.

How does one get a competition license? AAP director Mandy Eduque, a former rally driver who chairs AAP's motor sport committee, says that the requirements here are the same as those in other countries with FIA-affiliated national auto clubs.

Valid

The applicant must have a valid Philippine driver's license, be at least 15 years old (for karting cadet class, 8 is the minimum age) and be an AAP member in good standing. If not an AAP member, the applicant pays P1,200 for the competition license, P800 of which goes to his/her membership fee.

Aside from these requirements, the applicant must undergo a medical checkup by a doctor of medicine appointed by AAP. Dr. Danilo Marella, who goes to the AAP head office in Quezon City for this purpose, attended an FIA seminar in Macau several years ago on how to conduct the medical checkup of competition drivers.

Eye and blood pressure tests are important parts of the checkup. Those age 40 and above have to undergo an electrocardiogram (ECG) test upon application and every year when they renew their license. Those 45 and above also take a stress (treadmill) test at an accredited hospital's cardiovascular center.

Certified

But that's not all. To qualify for a competition license, you must be certified by a drivers' organization such as Pika (Philippine International Karting Association) or ARCP (Auto Rally Club of the Philippines). These organizations have a list of drivers qualified or certified for competition. Since the Philippine touring car series has no drivers' organization and a few accidents have occurred during its recent events, starting this year AAP will require novices to have a certification from a race driving school like J.P. Tuason's or Pocholo Ramirez's.

To ensure the safety of those involved in motor sport, an AAP representative attends each event to make sure that it is run according to AAP rules, especially safety rules. However, there are motor sport events that are held without AAP supervision in which drivers are not required to have competition licenses. These are either club events or races, like drag racing, organized by a group that refuses to accept AAP regulation.

Revoke

AAP can revoke a driver's competition license if he/she is found to have participated in a non-AAP-sanctioned motor sport event. Without an AAP-issued competition license, a driver from the Philippines cannot participate in motor sport events in other countries. But AAP-licensed competition drivers rarely participate in non-AAP-sanctioned events here. And most sponsors stay away from them.

Bottom line, the main objective is the promotion of safety and motor sport itself. AAP is hosting the annual Philippine Motor Sport Awards Night on Feb. 23, 2007 at the Valle Verde Country Club's ballroom.

* * *

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With ₱22B in deficit, NFA is biggest loser in gov't

GOCC's deficit has been rising from ₱4B in 2003

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) posted a P22.8-billion budget deficit in January to September last year, making it the biggest losing government-owned and -controlled corporation.

The NFA's deficit for the nine-month period already breached the P21.6-billion deficit projected by the Department of Finance (DOF) for the NFA for the full year of 2006.

The DOF monitors the financial performance of major state-owned firms.

The NFA has become the worst performing GOCC in terms of financial standing, after the National Power Corp., which succeeded in arresting the increase of its deficit.

The NFA's deficit had also been consistently rising. In 2003, the deficit hit only P4 billion. The figure rose to P7.6 billion in 2004, and ballooned to P21.2 billion last year.

The DOF earlier said it planned to conduct a study on how to resolve the financial burden on the government caused by the NFA.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the objective of the study would be to determine the advantages of privatizing one of NFA's core functions, specifically the trading of imported rice. Teves said it might be prudent for the NFA to simply focus on its regulatory role.

The NFA is the government entity mandated to import rice and ensure its sufficient supply to prevent a surge in the price of the staple. Aside from rice importation, the NFA likewise regulates the importation of rice by traders from the private sector.

Amid criticisms over the NFA's poor financial standing, its officials said the government agency should not be blamed for the losses, explaining that the deficit was simply a consequence of the fulfillment of the NFA mandate.

Because the NFA should sell rice at low prices, it has to shoulder the losses arising from the increase in the cost of rice imports, they explained.

Meralco to acquire insurance company

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ-LED Manila Electric Co. will acquire local fronting insurance firm Republic Surety and Insurance Co. Inc. to serve the distribution utility's own insurance needs.

"The captive insurance company will allow Meralco to insure its assets that cannot be insured commercially, and to efficiently manage its insurable risks," Meralco vice president Gil San Diego said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

The power distribution firm did not disclose the amount involved in the transaction, saying only that the price "is not substantial and will not amount to 10 percent of the total book value of Meralco."

"While our board of directors approved the acquisition, negotiation for desirable terms and conditions is still ongoing," San Diego said.

The Meralco board last month approved an increase in the company's authorized capital stock to P17.8 billion from the existing P13.8 billion.

CURRENCIES

January 23, 2007

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.772022	1.000000	48.9830
Japan	Yen	0.006346	0.008220	0.4026
United Kingdom	Pound	1.525747	1.976300	96.8051
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099006	0.128243	6.2817
Switzerland	Franc	0.618162	0.800705	39.2209
Canada	Dollar	0.653093	0.845952	41.4373
Singapore	Dollar	0.501867	0.650068	31.8423
Australia	Dollar	0.609283	0.789204	38.6576
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.047804	2.652520	129.9284
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205999	0.266830	13.0701
Brunei	Dollar	0.500241	0.647962	31.7391
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022039	0.028547	1.3983
UAE	Dirham	0.210212	0.272287	13.3374
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.295300	63.4477
Korea	Won	0.000821	0.001064	0.0521
China	Yuan**	0.099304	0.128629	6.3006
Argentina	Peso	0.250048	0.323887	15.8650
Brazil	Real	0.362111	0.469043	22.9751
Denmark	Kroner	0.134164	0.173783	8.5124
India	Rupee	0.017503	0.022671	1.1105
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220546	0.285673	13.9931
Mexico	New Peso	0.070543	0.091374	4.4758
New Zealand	Dollar	0.539951	0.699399	34.2587
South Africa	Rand	0.108889	0.141044	6.9088
Syria	Pound	0.014872	0.019264	0.9436
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023452	0.030377	1.4880

FOR BUSINESSMEN, ALL THE LUCK THEY NEED IS HERE
Jessie Alvior, 28, finds time to do his part-time job of fashioning dragon and lion figures in time for the Chinese New Year. The enterprising pedicab driver hopes to sell the figures for P7,500 apiece along C.M. Recto Avenue. The lion and dragon figures, according to the Chinese, bring luck to people. EDWIN BACASMAS

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

MITSUBISHI MOTORS

MITSUBISHI MOTORS Genuine parts

It has come to the attention of Mitsubishi Motors Corporation of Japan (hereinafter "MMC") that a number of business entities in the Philippines are selling counterfeit Mitsubishi-branded spare parts for automobiles. In doing so, these business entities are committing trademark infringement against the trademark owner of the Mitsubishi trademark and unfair competition against MMC, crimes that are punishable by 2 to 5 years of imprisonment and a fine of Pesos 50,000 to 200,000 under Republic Act No. 8293, the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

More significantly, these unscrupulous establishments are endangering the lives and safety of the motoring public by passing off substandard automotive parts as genuine Mitsubishi-branded spare parts. These counterfeit products have not been subjected to the rigorous testing and quality control standards that Mitsubishi Motors has become synonymous with.

In the past few weeks, MMC has intensified its campaign against those engaged in this illegal activity. A number of these establishments have been raided by the National Bureau of Investigation, and a large number of counterfeit spare parts have been seized. Criminal charges for unfair competition and trademark infringement are being prepared against the owners of these establishments.

MMC shall not hesitate to bring immediate legal action against those who are importing, selling and distributing counterfeit Mitsubishi spare parts.

The public is hereby advised to deal with authorized Mitsubishi dealers of automotive spare parts to avoid being deceived. Any information that may lead to the investigation and subsequent prosecution of persons or entities engaged in the illegal importation, sale and distribution of counterfeit spare parts should be directed to MMC's anti-counterfeiting legal counsel.

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Ecozone exports hit $36.1B in 2006

41 private 'special zones' shipped out $26.9B worth of products

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TOTAL EXPORT EARNINGS FROM THE country's economic zones reached $36.1 billion in 2006, or 12.6 percent higher than the $32 billion posted the previous year, according to the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Peza reported that the four public ecozones yielded a total of $8.12 billion in receipts, or an improvement of about 9.18 percent from $7.45 billion in 2005.

Among the four public ecozones, Baguio City Economic Zone exported about $2.95 billion worth of goods; Cavite Economic Zone, $2.33 billion; Mactan Economic Zone, $1.81 billion; and Bataan Economic Zone, $355.375 million.

The Baguio ecozone showed a 21-percent growth, while Bataan and Cavite grew by 5.5 percent and 4.18 percent, respectively. Mactan shrank by 1.45 percent.

At least 41 private or special economic zones (SEZ) shipped out a total of $26.94 billion worth of products, an increase of 11.46 percent from the year-ago $24.17 billion.

The top five SEZ exporters were Gateway Business Park at $6.59 billion; Laguna Technopark Inc., $6 billion; Amkor Technology SEZ, $1.97 billion; Carmelray Industrial Park I, $1.68 billion; and Leyte Industrial Development Estate, $1.4 billion.

Among these top five performers, Leyte Industrial—which hosts the Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp. and Philippine Phospate Festilizer Corp.—performed best with a 71.4-percent growth, while Laguna Technopark posted a 6.88-percent improvement.

Information technology parks and buildings grew the largest, earning a total of $1 billion in receipts, or an increase of 144.89 percent from $410.1 million.

The top five IT buildings and parks in 2006 were Eastwood City Cyber Park at $188.58 million; RCBC Plaza, $131.95 million; PBCom Tower, $115.18 million; MSE Center at $66.62 million; and Asiatown IT Park, $49.1 million.

Last week, the Department of Trade and Industry reported that the total amount of investments registered with the Board of Investments and Peza went up 18.6 percent to a total of P274 billion in 2006.

BSP may cut key rate, bank says

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas is likely to cut its key policy rate by 25 basis points when its Monetary Board meets tomorrow, according to investment bank DBS.

The bank said easing inflationary pressures would allow the BSP to loosen its monetary policy and support the government's economic growth target for 2007.

But the rate cut may take place only after the tiering system has been lifted to avoid making the central bank's policy too expansionary, DBS said in its paper on the Philippine economy.

Under the tiering scheme, deposits to the BSP in excess of P5 billion is imposed an interest rate lower than the headline policy rate of 7.5 percent.

But unlike DBS, other analysts have a different way of looking at the possible rate cut coupled with the lifting of the tiering scheme.

They said such a move would, in effect, be a rate hike rather than a rate cut, since the tiering scheme should loosen monetary policy more than a 25-basis-point rate cut would.

The BSP's 7.5-percent key policy rate has been steady since October 2005. The monetary authority has kept itself from implementing a cut in its key policy rate, being careful not to accelerate inflation.

But the tempered increase in consumer prices seen last year, and which is expected to be sustained this year, would give the BSP some elbow room to support pump-priming initiatives, the DBS said.

In December last year, annual inflation rate settled at only 4.3 percent, the lowest in almost three years. The slowdown was attributed to softer increase in global oil prices and appreciation of the peso.

"It's a fine balancing act of keeping inflation in check while trying to stimulate growth," DBS said. "Given that the BSP expects inflation to continue its downward trend in 2007, this would imply that it now has the flexibility to target growth."

The BSP uses its key policy rate as a tool to control inflation or support economic growth.

A rise in the rate encourages banks to park more of their funds as deposit to the BSP, therefore limiting available money in circulation and tempering inflation. A rate cut, on the other hand, encourages banks to use more of their funds for lending, therefore helping spur economic activity.

DBS said prospects that the peso would remain strong this year backed the move to cut the key rate. It said the peso would strengthen and even trade within the 47.7 to 47.3 range against the dollar in the first quarter, and fall to between 49.5 to 48.8 in the second quarter due to volatility arising from the May elections.

GeoGrace gets Zambales mine rights

By Daxim L. Lucas

MINING FIRM GEOGRACE RESOURCES Philippines Inc. has signed a deal with Garnierite Mining Inc. to acquire 100 percent of the latter's mining rights in Zambales province.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, GeoGrace said that it had signed a memorandum of agreement with Garnierite to acquire its entire issued and outstanding capital stock, as well as its rights over a nickel mining site.

The site covers 12,957 hectares of nickel property in the towns of Cabangan and Botolan in Zambales.

GeoGrace is listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange and was formerly known as Global Equities Inc.

No value was given for the transaction although the firm said it believed that the area held a sizable amount of nickel deposits. The metal is the main element used in producing stainless steel.

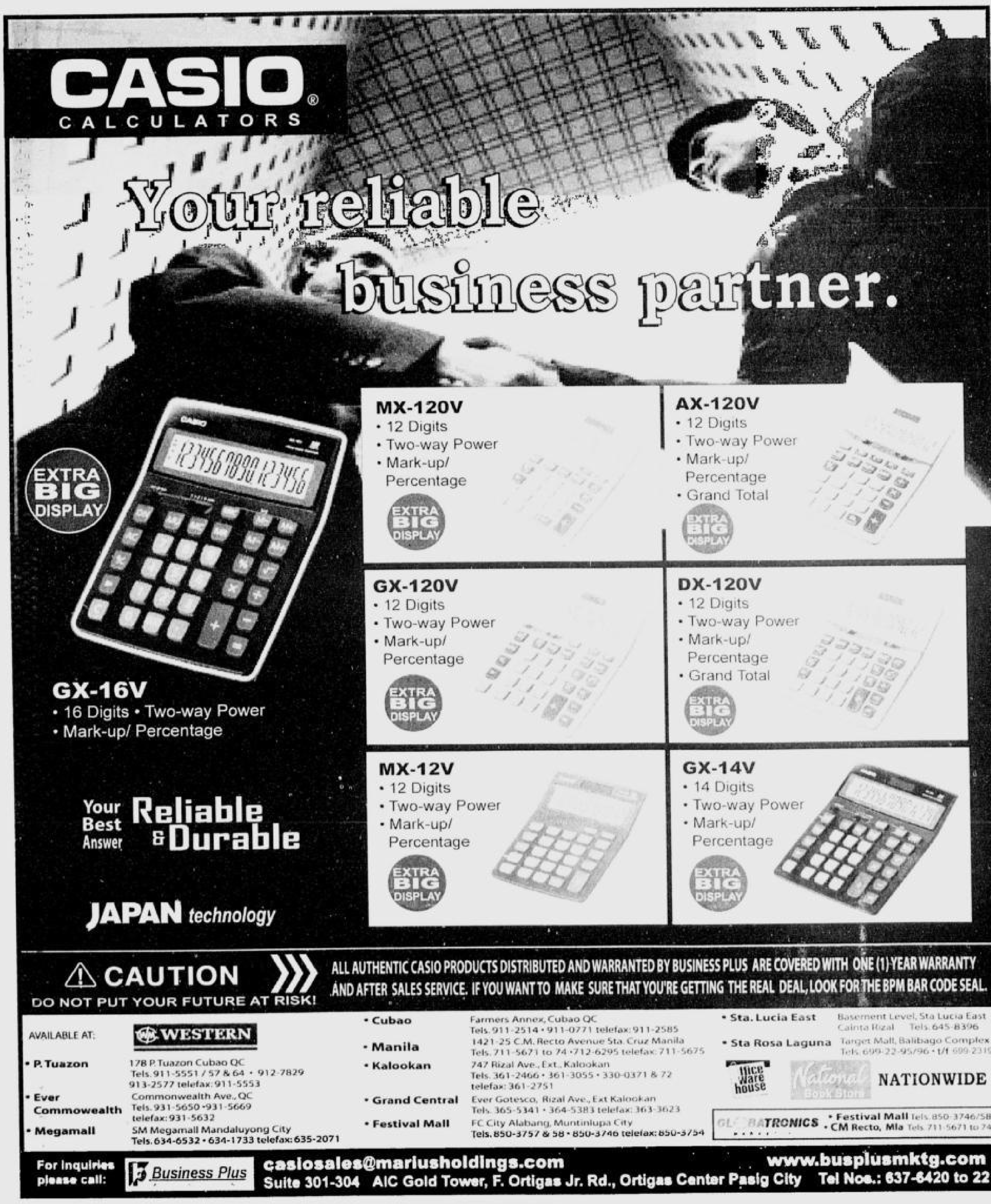
The value of nickel has risen sharply in recent years due to strong demand from countries like China and India.

Subject to the completion of the due diligence and the valuation of the Zambales mining right, the parties have the option to enter into a share-for-property swap agreement whereby GeoGrace shall issue new shares in favor of Garnierite in exchange for the mining rights.

The parties can also opt for a share-for-share swap deal where GeoGrace, which will issue new shares to the shareholders of Garnierite in exchange for 100 percent of the firm's total outstanding capital stock.

Recently, GeoGrace formed a joint venture with Australia's Rusina Mining N.L. to develop mining projects in the Philippines, using a similar scheme.

GeoGrace said the partnership with Rusina Mining, which is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange, involves a share swap between the two companies.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• Two-way Power
• Mark-up/ Percentage
• Grand Total
EXTRA BIG DISPLAY

GX-120V
• 12 Digits
• Two-way Power
• Mark-up/ Percentage
EXTRA BIG DISPLAY

DX-120V
• 12 Digits
• Two-way Power
• Mark-up/ Percentage
• Grand Total
EXTRA BIG DISPLAY

EXTRA BIG DISPLAY
GX-16V
• 16 Digits • Two-way Power
• Mark-up/ Percentage

MX-12V
• 12 Digits
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Banks urged to lend more to small traders

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT Authority said bank lending should grow annually by as much as 15 percent so that gains in the macroeconomic front would trickle down to the masses.

Since interest rates on government securities are at all-time lows, Neda Director General Romulo Neri said, this should force banks to shift some of their available funds from investments in Treasury bills and bonds to lending to private businesses.

"We (the government) have narrowed the door for T-bills," Neri said. "In time, banks will have to start developing more clients."

T-bill rates across all maturities dropped to their all-time lows last Monday, with the benchmark 91-day bills fetching 3.171 percent. Fiscal authorities attribute the fall to the high level of liquidity and positive market sentiment on the economy.

Earlier, Neri criticized banks for focusing their investments heavily on risk-free government securities. They have not been fulfilling their roles of helping boost economic growth because lending, a perceivably riskier investment activity, has been relatively weak, he explained.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas earlier reported that outstanding loans by commercial banks grew by 6.8 percent to P1.682 trillion in November last year compared with the year-ago figure.

Neri said the government wanted to see a much higher and sustained growth of between 10 and 15 percent so that the benefits of improved macroeconomic fundamentals would be felt by the people.

"Currently, the positive impact of macroeconomic gains is still only on the financial market," Neri said. "We have to start converting these indicators into real social gains."

The macroeconomic developments Neri was referring to were the decline in the government's budget deficit, the slowdown in inflation and the increase of the country's foreign currency reserves to all-time high, among others.

The country's chief economist said these developments have resulted in a bullish financial market, as reflected by the recent appreciation of the peso to a six-year high, and the fall of interest rates to historic lows.

But to make economic development holistic, Neri said, the common people should be able to benefit as well from the macroeconomic developments.

This is the reason banks should lend more to private businesses to spur business activity and therefore create more jobs, he explained.

Michelle V. Remo

SME exports reached $281M in '06, says DTI

SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED EXPORTERS earned a total of $281 million in 2006, or one percent higher than the $278.2 million posted the previous year, according to Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila.

Favila said earnings were made through 32 trade fairs and missions with the Department of Trade and Industry's Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions.

Favila said the export promotion effort helped 1,876 small and medium enterprises in strengthening their presence in priority markets like the United States, Europe, Japan and the Middle East, as well as in opening up new markets for them.

"The government's targeted marketing approach for 2006, as well as niche marketing of Philippine value-added products have helped strengthen our core competencies in exports," Favila said.

In last year's campaign, Citem showcased seven sectors including furniture, houseware and holiday décor industry, which accounted for $134 million of the total; food, with $88 million; information technology and IT-enabled services, with $32 million; and organic and natural products, with $19 million.

One of Citem's flagship programs, e-Services Philippines, generated $20.74 million in sales, attracting 1,678 local and foreign visitors.

Also, the Manila FAME International fair for furnishings, houseware, holiday décor and fashion accessories, generated $108.62 million.

The International Food Exhibition Philippines, or Ifex, posted $80 million in sales, with best-selling fresh and frozen fish, sardines, frozen fruits and vegetables, octopus, meat preparations like ham and sausage, processed fruits like banana chips and dried fruit cocktail, coffee and cocoa, cookies and crackers, and cereal preparations such as cake and polvoron.

The National Trade Fair for subcontractors—organized with the help of Product Development and Design Center of the Philippines, and SME Development Group—raked in P86 million from products made by 194 SMEs based in the provinces.

"We hope to build on our gains in export promotions last year and continue with more high level missions, and target high-value opportunities and new markets, especially in growth industries like IT and IT-enabled services to further boost our exports," Favila said.

Ronnel W. Domingo

IBP now 'e-asy to access'

THE INTEGRATED BAR OF THE Philippines (IBP) is the mandatory organization of all Philippine lawyers and counts among its members lawyers from as far north as Batanes and as far down as Tawi-Tawi. Because of this great distance, communication within the IBP can be difficult, and getting in touch with all its members a great challenge.

In response to this need for a fast and efficient communication, the IBP recently launched the IBP Public Service Portal (PSP) Project. A brainchild of the current IBP national president lawyer Jose Vicente Salazar, the project will make use of the mobile communications technology to allow more efficient information dissemination among the members of the legal community on matters pertaining to the Bar. The PSP is also expected to provide IBP members with continuous legal updates via an online bulletin, serving as a capacity-building medium to keep IBP members abreast of developments in the field of law.

At the same time, the PSP project will take advantage of an integrated Short Message Service (SMS) gateway which will enable legal aid lawyers and volunteers to provide legal advice to the public via messaging or scheduled live chats and provide relevant information via SMS to all members or a predetermined subgroup such as an IBP chapter.

Salazar pointed out that "as a public service, IBP lawyers and volunteers may provide free legal assistance to the public by contributing content to the portal. Lawyers can opt to join the committee on legal aid, take a crack at traditional legal aid or developmental legal aid, or they can choose to help through the Internet. We are giving lawyers options; at the same time, we are giving the public alternatives in accessing justice."

Though the PSP project is aimed at keeping the members of the legal community connected to each other and to the public in general, the IBP needs to obtain critical contact information of its members. To do this, the IBP is gathering from its members nationwide their mobile phone numbers, their e-mail addresses and other data needed for their portal enhancement.

For this purpose, the IBP has set-up IBP Database Enhancement Project (IBP-DEP) booths all over the country to gather the necessary information from the members. For this project to succeed, the full support and cooperation of all IBP members is needed. All members are requested to fill up all the information contained in forms sent to them.

Personal contact information may also be sent by e-mail to tech@ibp.org.ph or ibpnational@yahoo.com or via SMS to 0928-2445566, 0915-3835577 and 0922-7155255. IBP members who have signed up for the database can expect to receive regular legal updates via the project.

The IBP-PSP is a laudable project of the IBP which is meant to make it more responsive to the needs of its members, as well as the needs of a great number of Filipinos who otherwise would have no access to obtaining free-legal services.

IBP national president lawyer Jose Vicente Salazar (2nd from right) with officers

Make money with perfumery

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A REAL money-making opportunity, join the exciting and highly profitable perfumery business through Chemworld's Perfume-Making Seminar/Workshop.

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Initial investment is only P500 for the starter pack you will use during the hands-on. What you blend during the workshop, you get to bring home which you can easily sell for twice your investment.

Seats are limited to 10 participants and by reservation only. Confirm your participation by calling 895-4410 or texting 0917-3252444/0920-5491107.

Forum on Philippine crocodiles

FROM JAN. 31 TO FEB. 2, THE National Museum of the Philippines, Silliman University, Veterinary Office of the City of Manila, and Crocodylus Porosus Philippines Inc will hold a forum on Philippine crocodiles at the Museum of the Filipino People, Tambunting Hall, National Museum of the Philippines at the Old Finance Building, Finance Road (between Taft Avenue and Burgos Street).

The forum was developed with three primary goals. It is the first opportunity for the Filipino conservation, scientific, and government organizations to respond to the need for conserving a large, endangered predator in the Philippines and challenge international criticism of existing (or non-existing) policies and programs. The Forum is a Filipino dialogue with foreign participants, mostly as observers. To date, 24 foreign participants from 10 countries are confirmed attendees.

Crocodile conservation in the Philippines centers on the Philippine Crocodile. The endangered status of the Indo-Pacific Crocodile is ignored. This forum hopes to spotlight all aspects of both species in the Philippines.

Commercial interest in crocodiles in the Philippines has ignited new possibilities to research and conserve both species. The forum brings together, for the first time in the Philippines, the diverse worlds of business and wildlife conservation.

During the first two days 38 presentations and papers are scheduled. Of these, at least 29 are from Filipino authors ranging from high school students to Cabinet members. Topics of presentations range from microbiology, conservation, animal welfare, role of local government, new range records and biology, genetics, and ethnology.

Invited dignitaries are Sec. Angelo Reyes of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Sec. Arthur C. Yap of the Department of Agriculture, Dr. Corazon S. Alvina, Director IV, National Museum of the Philippines, Dr. Ben S. Malayang, III, president, Silliman University, Vicente P. Mercado, president, Crocodylus Porosus Philippines Inc, Dr. Angel C. Alcala, director, Silliman University-Angelo King Center for Research and Environmental Management, Dr. Grahame Webb, chair of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Crocodile Specialists Group (CSG).

Dell holds rock concerts in Eastwood

THOUGH ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN global technology brands, at the first mention of the name Dell, the impression it gives us is that it's all about the cold digital world of computers-not exactly rock and roll. But now, Dell rolls up its sleeves, loosens its tie, kicks back and rocks out with the best of them.

Mark this on your calendars: Jan 25 to 27, Dell launches one of the first big rock music events of the year-bringing to the Eastwood Central Plaza three of the hottest rock bands in the local scene today—Up Dharma Down, Orange and Lemons, and Rivermaya—to coincide with its recruitment efforts for its fast-growing Dell Customer Support Centers in the Philippines. Interested applicants are encouraged to bring their resumes to the various recruitment booths around the Eastwood Center Plaza during the concert series.

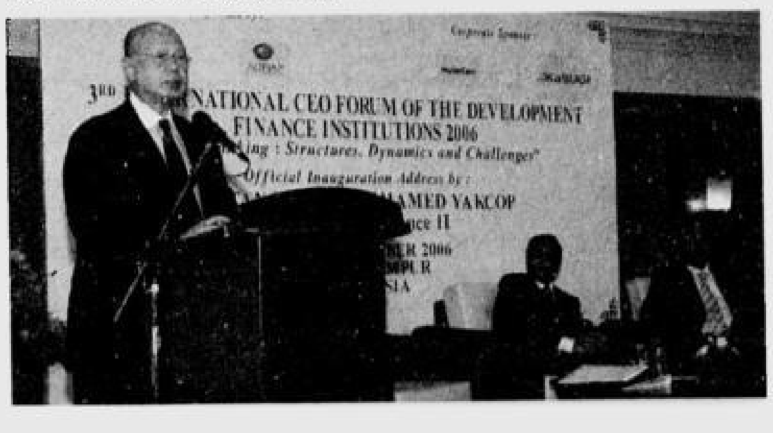
.But don't mistake it for a call center. Dell offers vast career growth opportunities and a chance to make a real difference to its employees and to the world. It's called the Total Value of working at Dell.

Plantersbank chair addresses Kuala Lumpur CEO forum

Plantersbank chair and CEO Ambassador Jesus P. Tambunting addressed the recent International CEO Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for the bank's success in lending to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

In the conference themed "SME Banking: Structures, Dynamics and Challenges", Tambunting noted the high priority accorded SME promotion in the economic agenda of countries across the Asia-Pacific region as well as the emergence of SME banks contributing to the success of SME lending in the region.

Tambunting also expressed optimism in technological advances, the standardization of business rules, and new financial instruments that have enabled development finance institutions to find common ground in their resolve to support SMEs.



3RD INTERNATIONAL CEO FORUM OF THE DEVELOPMENT FINANCE INSTITUTIONS 2006

Shown, from left, is Tambunting, Malaysian Minister of Finance YB Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop and Development Bank of Malaysia president and group managing director Dato Abdul Rahim Mohd Zin.

BPI-FSB PRESIDENT'S TREAT

Every quarter, BPI Family Savings Bank president, Alfonso Salcedo Jr., hosts a lunch for its top performing brokers. They are brokers who refer successful who refer successful housing loan bookings to the bank and they are ranked according to the highest loan amount they bring in. Dubbed as the President's Treat, the quarterly lunch is on its third year. The third quarter lunch was held recently at the Kisakura Restaurant along Pasay Road. It was attended by top brokers Carolyn Untalan, Jeanne Red, Carl Dy, Minda Tuazon, Joylinne Tan and Marilyn Villarosa. In addition to the sumptuous lunch, the valued brokers were presented with gift items.

Shown in photo (from left, seated): BPI SVP Nita Claravall, Joylinne Tan, Minda Tuazon, BPI Family Savings Bank (BFSB) president Alfonso Salcedo Jr., Marilyn Villarosa, Carolyn Untalan and Jeanne Red; (standing): BFSB SM Erwin Galura, BFSB VP Jocelyn Sta. Ana, BFSB AVP Ruel Magtoto and Carl Dy.

BEEF TACOS, COCINA ARGENTINA STYLE

Cocina Argentina chef Cristina (left) assists a homemaker in preparing Argentina Corned Beef Tacos during the 'Argentina Ole' lifestyle class at the Century Culinary Circle, Unit 107 of Ortigas Bazaar Building, Ortigas Town Center, Doña J. Vargas, Pasig City. Cocina Argentina, the culinary club of Pacific Meat Company Inc (PMCI), helped homemakers discover many innovative recipes and also provided the participants with information on the different ingredients and their uses. For more information on Cocina Argentina's Culinary Class monthly themes and schedule of classes, call 637-1028 or e-mail at cocinaargentina@yahoo.com.

Giving 'accent' to better products, better service

WITH THE KIND OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADvancements happening in the IT industry and with a slew of IT products being sold left and right among the various IT product distributors and resellers, perhaps one would wonder, "is the IT industry really thriving?"

Perhaps so, if the comments of Stephen Yu, president of Accent Micro Products Inc, a major retailer of a wide range of branded IT products and peripherals, are to be analyzed. Yu says with the staggering advancement of technology and with the stronger partnership between them and their vendors, it would be safe to surmise that the IT industry is thriving, compared to 10 years ago.

"Right now, anything about IT is no longer restricted to the so-called tech-savvy people or to businessmen. Plain consumers are now, more than ever, learning about the value that IT presents to their lives, even finding creative ways to fully integrate technology to their lifestyle, thus improving and enhancing their lives," Yu said.

But when they first started in the business around 10 years ago with their first store in SM Megamall, Yu's business, being one of the newer retailers at that time, faced the challenge of plunging in a market already filled with established and mature competitors. "But the presence of competitors was not really our biggest challenge. The major challenge we faced that time, and even to this day, is finding ways to improve our value proposition to our customers," he added.

This explains why Yu established the premiére partner agreement with Acer Philippines Inc, the local subsidiary of Acer Inc, one of the world's top computer manufacturers. At present, Accent Micro Products Inc has had a standing partnership with Acer for the past three years.

He said that it was good to have a partnership with Acer since Acer products have been at the forefront of technology ever since, with its various IT products and solutions like desktop and notebook computers, servers, monitors, and projectors that continue to be patronized by customers.

"They exert a different level of (passion) in terms of the design and creation of their products. Every product is completely innovative. Power, because Acer, as a company at such a young age in the industry, has already demonstrated that it can compete side-by-side with the other more established IT product manufacturers in the world, as reflected in their current position as one of the top four computer manufacturers around the world. And prestige because Acer products have already displayed credibility in the market and truly bring value-for-money for even the most discriminate and demanding customer, coupled with a one-of-a-kind after-sales service support system. It's really a potent mix of premium products and better service," Yu adds.

In the end, when asked to sum up their partnership with Acer Philippines, Yu stated, "While we did not grow up with Acer, we certainly plan on growing old with them."

BAKERY FAIR 2007
The 4th International Bakery & Confectionery
MARCH 8-11
Trade Center Manila

US WHEAT ASSOCIATES JOINS BAKERY FAIR 2007

US Wheat Associates recently signed an agreement with the Filipino-Chinese Bakery Association Inc for Bakery Fair 2007 slated from March 8 to 10 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila. Signing the agreement are (from left) FCBAI president James Chua, FCBAI treasurer and Bakery Fair committee chair Henry Ah, assistant regional director for South Asia Michael Spiers and FCBAI executive vice president Marcos Ong.

BURGER STORM!

MANG INASAL READY FOR DINAGYANG FESTIVAL

Mang Inasal is ready for the Dinagyang Festival in Iloilo this January! Move your hips and sway to the beat of the drums as Iloilo's spectacular fiesta takes over the province. Mang Inasal is part of the action with its various sponsorships of fun activities during the month-long celebration. Known for its sumptuous 'inasal' products nationwide, Mang Inasal is sure to cater to all hungry celebrators in the most exciting fiesta in Iloilo. Experience local culture with the Dinagyang Festival and Mang Inasal. Just recently, Mang Inasal opened its 31st branch at the Fiesta Street of SM City Cebu. Opening by Feb. 1 is another Mang Inasal at the corner of Sen. Gil Puyat and Taft Avenues (beside Atrium Hotel). For more inquiries about Mang Inasal as well as franchising opportunities, log on to www.manginasal.com

PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

2007 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
From left, Faith Abano, Vice President for Youth and Academe; Mon Lizardo, Vice President for Education; Gwen Albarracin, Director for Fellowship and Sports; Jerry Yao, Director for Community and Consumer Affairs; Sonia de Guzman, Treasurer; Jaime Sibauco, Board Secretary; Ricky Alegre, President; Herminio del Rosario, EVP/Director-Corp. Comm.; Mylene Sazon, Vice President for Membership; Tom Banguis, Immediate Past President; Ting Samonte, Internal Auditor/ Dir. Meetings & Attendance; Rene Espinosa, Director for National Marketing Month; Erlinda de Guzman, Director for Agora Awards, (Not in Photo) Ed Mapanao., Director for National Marketing Conference; Atty, Nicasio Conti, Director for Government Affairs; and Ricky de Vera, VP for Chapters.

Warmest greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Marketing Association inc. as you commemorate your 53rd Anniverysary and Induction Ceremonies.

Over the years, your association has provided your memberswith tools necessary to improvetheir marketing skills. And it has not ceased there.

This year, your theme, "The Global Marketing Revolution begins!" shows your efforts to prepare our local entrepreneurs, investors and business professionals to be more competitive particularly in the field of global marketing. This indeed is keeping in step with the change in dynamics of a global village which is getting more interactive everyday. Sustaining the country's presence in this interaction shall be your objective and I am confident you will succeed.

Again, happy anniversary and congratulations to your new set of officers. Mabuhay!

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

The global marketing revolution has definitely begun. But contrary to popular belief, it is not a threat to local, regional, and national cultural identities. Rather, it is an oppurtunity to create global alliances that make products and experiences appeal to consumers of each market.

Congratulations and more power to the Philippine Marketing Association!

FRANCIS D. LUMEN
President and CEO
All Youth Channels Inc. (MTV Phils.)

The Global Marketing revolution begins

Moving forward from conquering the challenge of the previous year, the Philippine Marketing Association is now gearing up for the next level of the marketers' undertaking. Daring them to take on a strategy that will make them healthy playersin the global battlefield, their theme "The Global Marketing Revolution begins!" aims to present a dynamic approach to the constantly changing world of marketing.

Hoping to help bring the country move from third to first world status, PMA hopes to keep the Filipinos aptly grounded so that they may be confident enough to face their counterparts in the Asia-pacific region, and eventually, in the whole wide world.

Symbolizing the quest to reach far and wide, PMA will be organizing several events and activities so that the experts may impart what they have learned through years of experience to this generation's up and coming world class marketers.

As there are Filipinos elsewhere in the globe, the organization also hopes to make their countrymen stand out among other nationalities by equipping them with the skills and knowledge in marketing through special events and activities anchored on their theme.

Foreseen as an opportunity to create global alliances that will make products and experiences appeal to consumers of different markets in the world, getting on the globalization trend is not at all a threat to local, regional, and national cultural identities. In fact PMA sees it as a chance to promote the Filipinos' innate ingenuity that is without a doubt at par with the stringent standards of their worldwide counterparts.

Promising to continue the organization's industry-wide programs and outreach projects, the newly inducted officers also hope to highlight the importance of the Filipino marketers, not only as professionals but also as major economic players in the Philippine society at large.

"The revolution in itself has already been going on, especially for the Filipinos," Ricky Alegre, newly appointed PMA president, said. "Because the Filipinos are already in the battlefield, we must step up and learn how to endure."

Setting the spotlight on the man on a global mission

Global Ako! Angat Ako!

These passionate words are the latest battle cry of the Philippine Marketing Association (PMA) greatly inspired by its newly elect president Ricky M. Alegre who has expanded his horizons in the marketing profession aside from being the director and public relations officer of the United Print Media Group (UPMG), director of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) Metro Manila Chapter and the Vice-President for Corporate Affairs of the Business Mirror with utmost confidence of taking Philippine marketing excellence to the next level.

Looking forward to zeroing in on PMA's vision of making the local marketing practices bravely face the challenges of global demands, Alegre presents higher ground for PMA to take, as encouraged by last year's theme of "Moving up to World Class!" through spearheading the representation of the Filipino Marketer vis-à-vis his counterparts in the Asia-pacific region.

With this year's theme, "The Global Marketing revolution begins!" PMA will be more adept to present a dynamic approach to the dynamically changing world of marketing around the globe.

As a long-time pursuer of truth and objectivity in his journalistic profession, Alegre has recognized the importance of the association's better understanding of and stronger partnership with the media. Thus, he looks forward to further strengthening its relationship with them through summits and assemblies that would help them set an avenue in conducting worthwhile projects together. Known for his responsible leadership and strategic decision-making by close friends and colleagues, his desires for an ultimate marketing brilliance to proliferate in the industry has spawned many productive activities for PMA in 2007. Members of the leading association and prime movers of the marketing field can expect full-blast and aggressive programs that will greatly help in the fulfillment of their united goals, most of which are promising and highly feasible plans from Alegre's platforms like gathering strong support from leading industry groups and private companies, enterprising presence in the Internet portals aptly coined as "the media of the future" among others, consequently towards achieving its goals as the country's leading marketing organization.

Recognizing the Filipino potential in becoming at par with the best and the finest in the world, Alegre's leadership promises a ray of hope for the Filipino marketer in its quest to reach far beyond the limits of third world marketing practices as he leads in clamoring the battlecry "Global Ako! Angat Ako!" attempting to make a difference as the foreign leaders lend their ears.

'We pledged to uphold the ideals of the Filipino Marketing industry by carrying on the programs and to add some others in our sterling campaigns to step up and push the brand, that is, Filipino Marketing, to the fullest'

FREDERICK 'RICKY' M. ALEGRE
VP Corporate Affairs,
Business Mirror
and Philippine Graphic President,
Philippine Marketing Association 2007

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Voted the Philippines' Most Improved Company

Euromoney Best Asian Companies Awards - 2005
Voted among Asia's Best Property Companies
Voted among Asia's Most Improved Companies
Voted among Asian Companies with the Most Convincing and Coherent Strategy

FinanceAsia Best-managed Asian Companies Awards-2004
Voted among Asia's Best-managed Companies
Voted among the Philippines' Best in Investor Relations

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Voted the Philippines' Best in Investor Relations
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PHILIPPINE MARKETING ASSOCIATION
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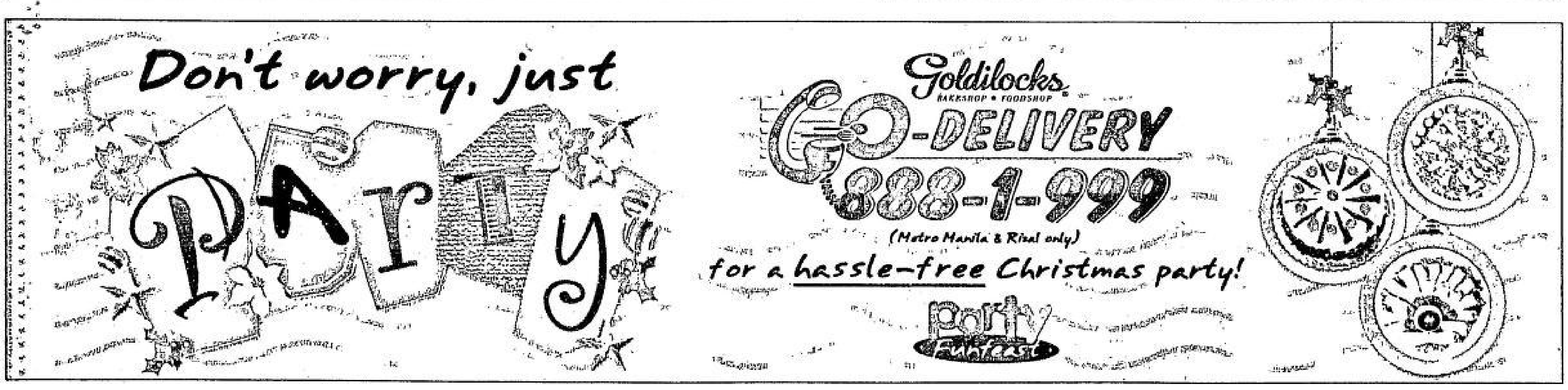

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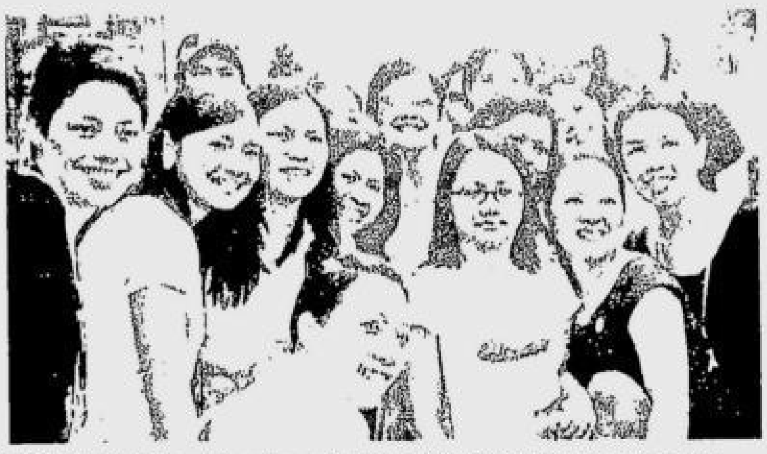


HAVAIANAS fanatics who call themselves "Havaianaticos" pause for a group photo.

Text and photos by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR NEW year's resolution list. Does it include "I will exercise more" or "I will lose weight" this year? If so, have you already begun your exercise regimen? Chances are, if you haven't started yet, you will probably have a hard time sneaking in some exercise into your daily routine.

The lack of exercise doesn't just mean that you'll have a hard time shopping for a swimsuit this summer. A sedentary lifestyle will also expose you to life-threatening health problems such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and cancer, among others.

Studies have shown that an increasing number of the youth is coming down with health problems normally associated with middle-age adults, primarily because of cholesterol-laden food and lack of exercise.

So if you're spending too much time in front of the television or the computer (and if you depend on your *yaya* to make snacks for you), then you're putting yourself on the fast track to the hospital.

Try to set aside a few hours every week to go to the gym or jog around your school campus; you could also play badminton or basketball with a buddy to make your exercise routine more fun.

Leisurely exercise

But if you can't shell out big bucks for gym membership or are pressed for time, leisurely walking might be the answer for you. According to fitness expert Tina Juan: "The problem with modern life is there's little or no activity. To keep fit, you should take at least 10,000 steps a day, the equivalent of five miles. However, an average sedentary office worker takes about 3,000 steps a day."

Although computers made life a lot easier for people, it also made them more sedentary. Simple activities such as shopping are done online, while online conferences have eliminated the need to attend meetings in person.

Because of this, fitness experts around the world started to promote lifestyle walking in order to make exercise more accessible.

According to Juan, the idea of lifestyle walking grew from findings by scientists that indicate exercise could be broken down to small increments. Instead of setting aside two to three hours for a workout, you can do your exercise in small blocks of time throughout the day.

This means that two 15-minute exercises in one day are just as effective as a 30-minute workout. The idea is to accumulate small amounts physical activity instead of foregoing it altogether when busy.

Media hop

To prove her point, Juan, along with popular tour guide Carlos Celdran, took the media around Makati for a walking tour sponsored by flip-flop brand Havaianas.

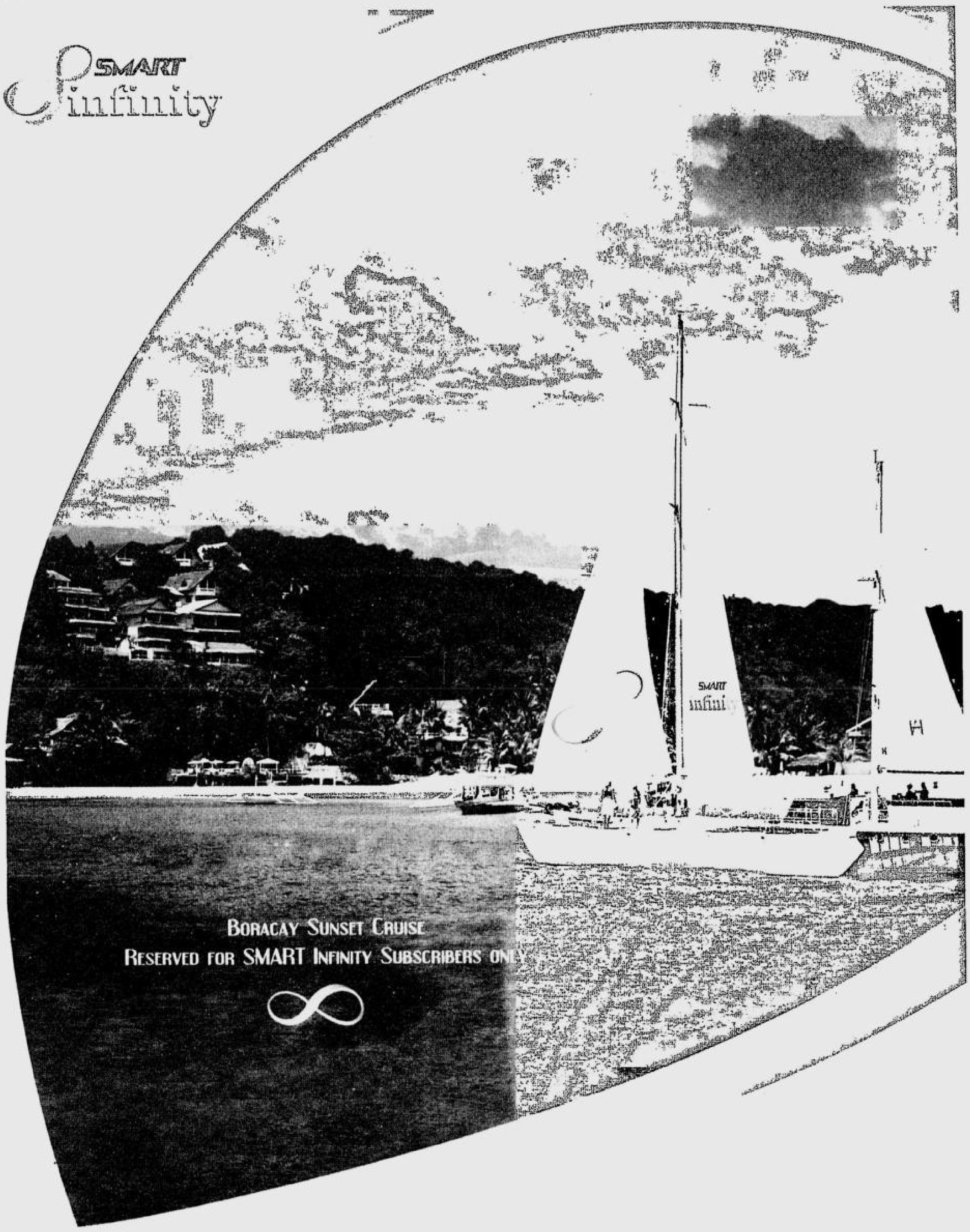
While Celdran pointed out historic spots along Legaspi Village and Paseo de Roxas, Juan explained the benefits of fitness walking.

"Start out small—take the stairs instead of an elevator, walk around your living room during commercial breaks or do simple chores around the house," Juan said.

During the walk, several pit stops showed how Havaianas had become integrated into pop culture: painters showed off Havaianas-inspired artwork, ballroom dancers waltzed around the street in their flip-flops, and Havaianas junkie Pam Pastor showed her collection in a video clip and explained why she loved the brand. Organizers also invited a group of Havaianas lovers, who call themselves the "Havaianaticos," to the event.

"In lifestyle walking, you should always be comfortable," Juan said. "You wouldn't want to walk when your feet are killing you. The thick rubber of Havaianas allows you to walk around in comfort, which encourages you to walk around more. Of course, they aren't substitutes for rubber shoes, so don't use them for strenuous physical activity, but they're perfect for strolling around."

FLIP-FLOPPING/C5



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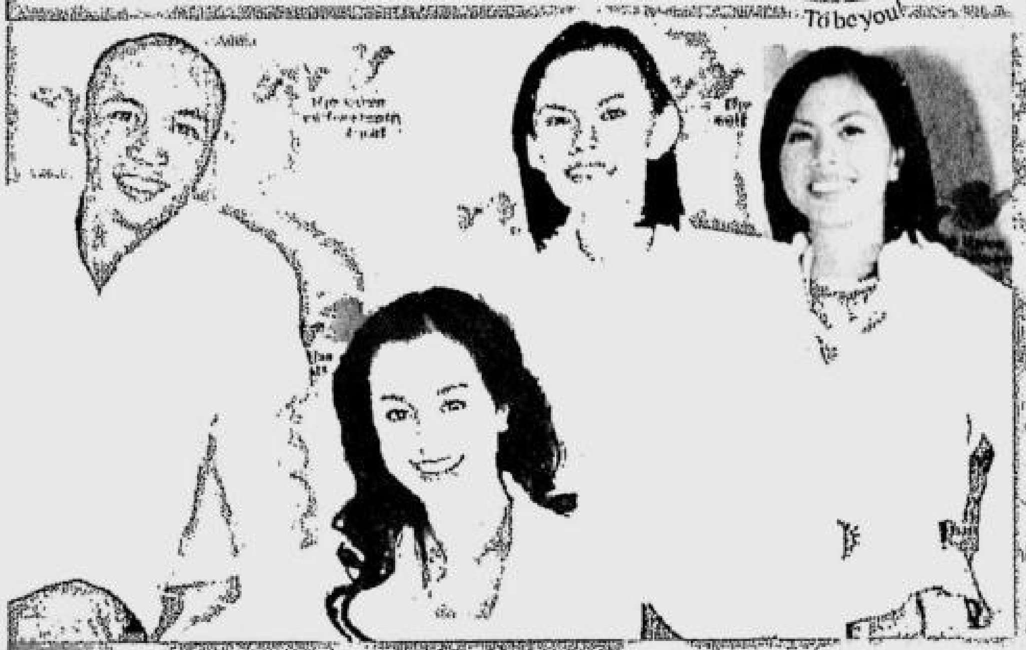


MIKEE Cojuangco Jaworski with Unilever category head Dondi Gomez and Dove's Stephanie Lim and Bernice Gonzalez

The Dove Self-Esteem Fund allows women to care for the self-esteem of young girls as they care for their skin.

DOVE brand manager Stephanie Lim, GSP national president Teresita Choa, DepEd Secretary Jesli Lapus and Unilever general manager for corporate development Chito Macapagal

MIKEE Cojuangco with Dove mavens Nicole Fonacier, Patricia Bermudez and Kate Torralba

Self-esteem booster

By Pam Pastor

BACK WHEN MY EYES WERE still wide with innocence, the only unrealistic standard of beauty thrown in my face every single day was Barbie. And I knew she wasn't real—no one I knew looked like her. The thought of comparing her blonde hair, perfect waist and curves to my dark locks, protruding tummy and baby fat never entered my mind. She, to me, was just another toy.

Little girls have it much tougher nowadays. Unrealistic standards of beauty are imposed on them every single day. On television, in magazines, on the Internet. Photoshopped pictures, plastic surgery queens, crash diets left and right.

The Olsen Twins, Lindsay Lohan, Paris Hilton, every other fashion cover.

Long-term self-esteem

Studies have shown that a girl's view of beauty during her formative years (6-17 years old) may have a negative or positive impact on her long-term self-esteem. Psychologists have even discovered that just three minutes of looking at fashion magazines lowers the self-esteem of 80 percent of women.

Dove, which has always pushed diversity in beauty, commissioned a global comprehensive study to explore the impact of beauty ideals on women's lives.

In the Philippines, the study involved girls aged 15-17 and women aged 18-64. The results were not good: 95 percent of Filipina women today say they don't feel beautiful and want to change their looks; 40 percent of the respondents said that they are considering cosmetic surgery to enhance their appearance; 51 percent said that whenever they feel bad about themselves, it is usually looks- or weight-related; 49 percent were insecure about their body weight; 40 percent had issues with their body shape; and compared to other Asian women, Filipinas were shown to be the most dissatisfied with their skin tone.

An overall dissatisfaction was revealed—and it became known that in the Philippines, most girls start becoming concerned about their looks at the age of 14.

Hang-ups about looks have long-term effects on the confidence of women. A negative body image may result in low self-esteem.

According to studies, 90 percent of Filipinas avoid social interaction when they feel bad about their looks.

More than talk

Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty has ignited debate and talk about today's unattainable standards of beauty. The campaign hopes inspire women to take care for themselves.

And this time, Dove wants to do more than just talk—it wants to make a difference in the lives of little girls through Dove's Self-Esteem Fund and BodyTalk.

"Given this reality, women and teenagers alike clamor for change," said Dondi Gomez, category director for skin and deodorants of Unilever Philippines. "They want these issues to be discussed earlier on in the lives of girls. In response to this, the BodyTalk workshop was created to help young girls build positive self-image by understanding and dealing with perceptions and feelings about physical appearance. Through this, we hope to educate young girls on a wider definition of beauty and inspire them to be confident to reach their full potential in life."

The Girl Scouts of the Philippines lends its endorsement to the activity and will incorporate BodyTalk as part of the enrichment programs for its members.

Proceeds from Dove sales will be used to run BodyTalk, building body confidence workshops for young Filipinas. It is the very first body-image workshop in the country. During the half-day workshop, girls from 8-14 will participate in self-image enrichment activities and get to understand body-image and its relation to self-esteem.

Workshops

Each workshop is divided into different parts.

"All About Me" encourages young girls to appreciate themselves by becoming aware of their beauty and talents.

"Beauty Standards and Me" opens young girls' eyes to the reality behind beauty stereotypes today, in hopes of freeing them from the pressure of these unattainable ideals.

"Building Positive Self-Image" arms them with tools and tips to help them overcome beauty insecurities.

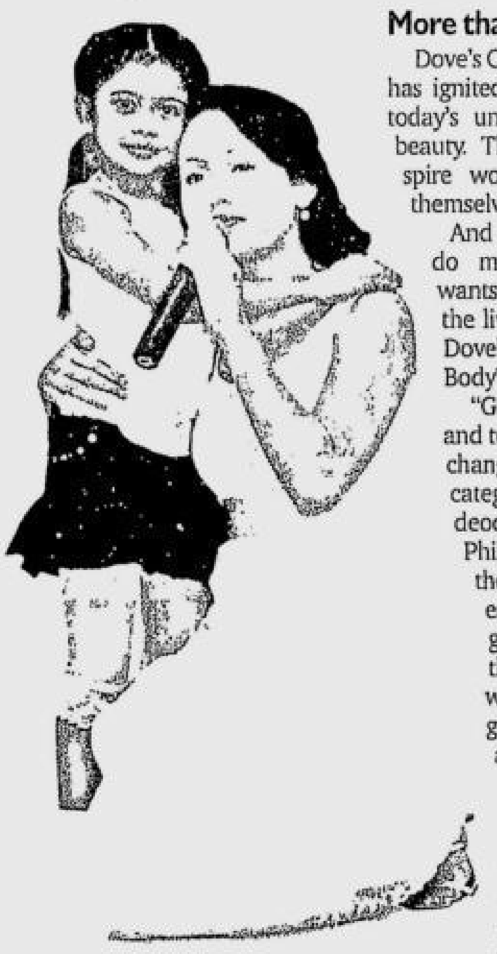
"A Promise to Myself" allows the girls to affirm and celebrate their own unique beauty.

The Dove Self-Esteem Fund allows women to care for the self-esteem of young girls as they care for their skin.

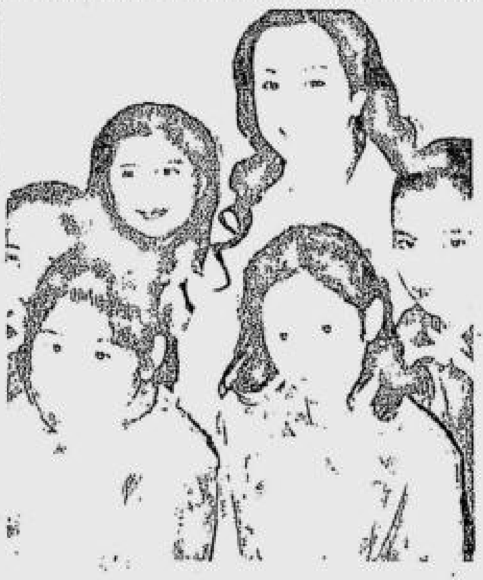
By purchasing Dove products, women are able to give to the fund and help liberate young girls from beauty stereotypes.

For more information, visit www.campaignforrealbeauty.ph.

STEPHANIE Lim with family therapist Ma. Elena Cristobal



CRIS Villonco



MIKEE with the Girl Scouts of the Philippines

Be a part of 2bU! and Dove's Self-Esteem Chronicles

LAST WEEK, DOVE LAUNCHED THE DOVE Self-Esteem Fund which will be used to run BodyTalk Workshops for young girls. This time, we want to read your self-esteem story.

Share your story. Use the following questions as a guide.

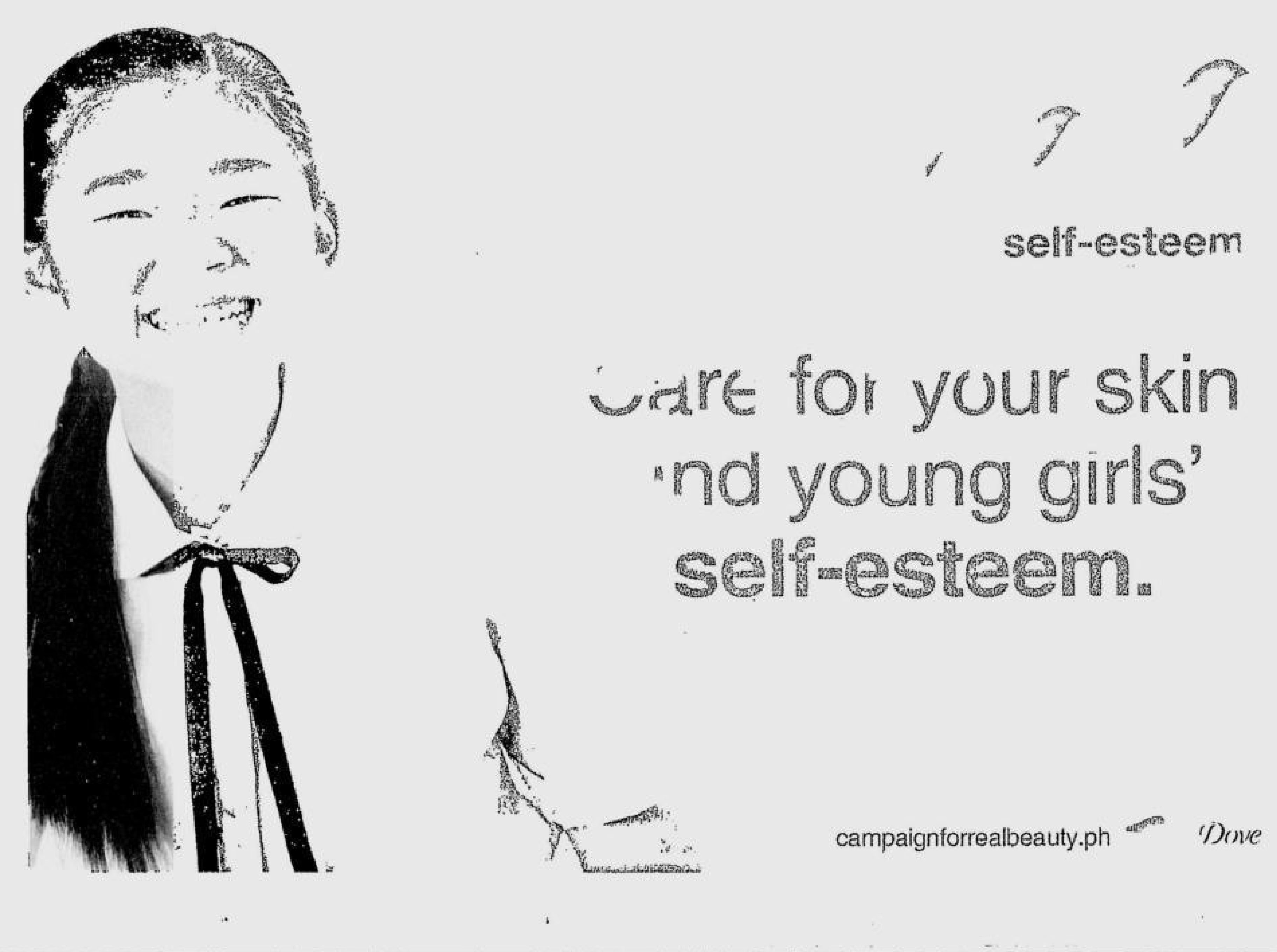
Tell us about your childhood beauty insecurity. Why did it develop? Did it make an impact on your self-confidence and your ability to reach your goals and maximize your potential? How did caring for yourself help you overcome your hang-ups? Do you have tips for building positive self-image?

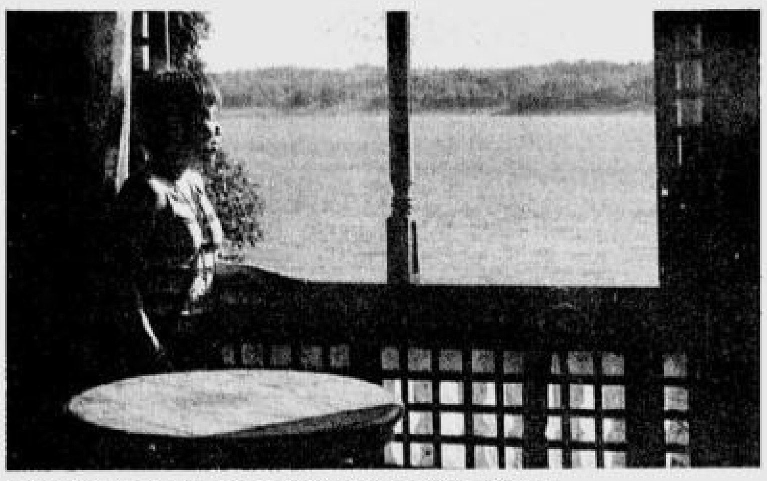
2bU! and Dove will be running the Self-Esteem Chronicles for the next eight weeks, until March 14. One story will be chosen each week. Deadline of entries is every Saturday. Essays must be a maximum of 4,000 characters.

If your story is selected, it will be published in 2bU! and you will receive Dove gift packs and a limited-edition Dove Statement Tee designed by Kate Torralba.

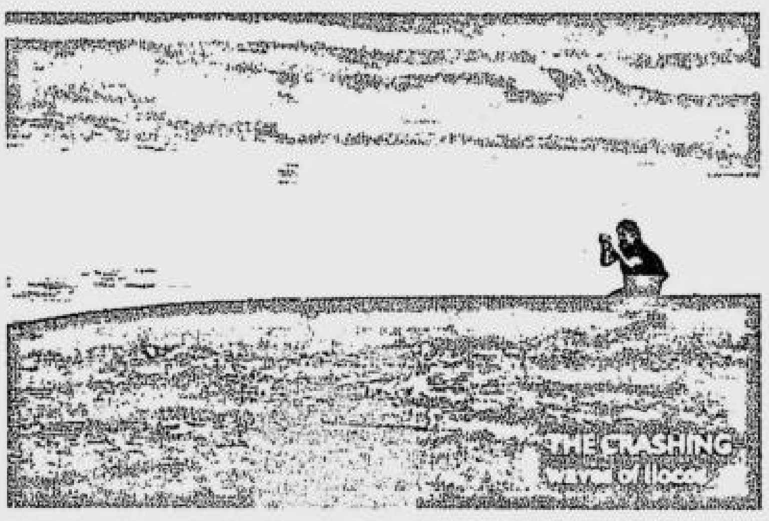
Don't forget to choose which shirt statement you want ["A dark child can brighten your day"; "A chubby kid can live large"; "A short child can stand tall"; "100% real beauty"; and which size you will need "I'm petite and a big dreamer (bust: 26-28 inches); "I'm somewhere in between, but just as sweet (29-32 inches); "I'm big and beautiful (33-36 inches)].

E-mail your entries to selfesteemchronicles@gmail.com along with your name, age, contact info, school/office.




FEELING Imeldific at the Malacañang of the North

THE FAKE Macoy and his old desk



Northern sights

The Ilocanos may be frugal but Ilocandia is generous with cultural, historical and gastronomical adventures

By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

FOR MANY MANILA URBANISTAS, ILOCOS Norte is near yet so far. It takes an average 10 hours to get there by land. It is funny how some Metro Manilans often complain that the Ilocos region, or "Ilocandia," is far compared with other destinations such as Cebu and Davao, which are even farther, geography-wise.

But getting to the Ilocos is worth the gas-station breaks and travel fatigue.

Ilocandia, which is composed of Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur, is rich with historical landmarks, cultural attractions and gastronomical treats.

Ilocos Norte in particular is more than old churches and a haven for Taiwanese tourists.

Here are some suggestions that will make Ilocos Norte seem like the better option compared to "relaxing" in an overcrowded mall-like beach.

Better set aside at least three days to have the full Ilocandia experience, from eating *empanadas* to sunbathing in Pagudpud.

Gateway to the North

Ilocos Norte, dubbed Gateway to the North, is located at the tip and Northwestern part of Luzon. It has one city and 22 towns.

The capital, Laoag City, has an international airport, and a first-class resort and casino, The Ilocandia.

The first thing to do when you get to Ilocos Norte is to take a snapshot of yourself in the arch of Ilocos Norte and/or Laoag City.

After that, be prepared to get lost and charmed.

Notable places to go to during your day trip around Ilocos Norte would be the towns of Paoay, Pagudpud, Badoc, Batac, Currimao and Carasi.

In Paoay, you can find the landmark that launched a thousand postcards, the Paoay Church. This Unesco World Heritage site was built in the 18th century; it mixes the architecture styles of baroque, gothic and oriental.

It is suggested you take photographs in the late afternoon when the church and the bell tower look majestic against the clear sky.

Besides its centuries-old church, Paoay is known for the Valentin Diaz marker, Paoay golf course, *chichacorn* or *cornik* (fried corn bits), loom weaving and the Malacañang of the North.

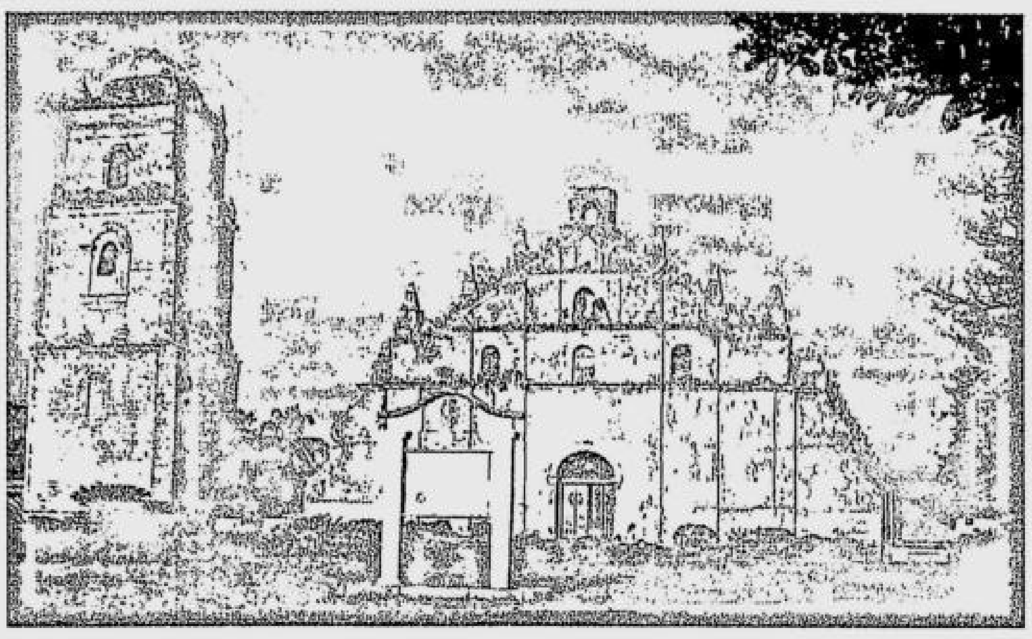
Malacañang of the North, or Malacañang ti Amianan, was one of the rest houses of President Ferdinand Marcos built during his 20-year term. It is now open to the public and even weddings can be held in the main hall or the garden.

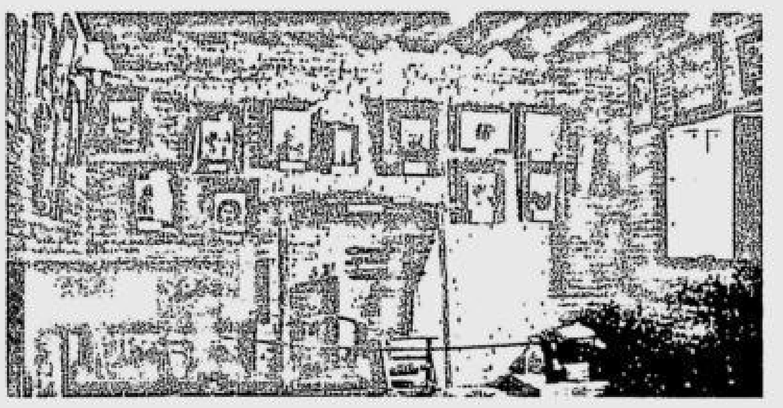
The rest house is overlooking the Paoay lake where the late former president would jetski.

Legend tells that a whole barangay used to be on the same spot as the lake, but because of people's decadent lifestyle, God became unhappy and sent floods to drown the village.

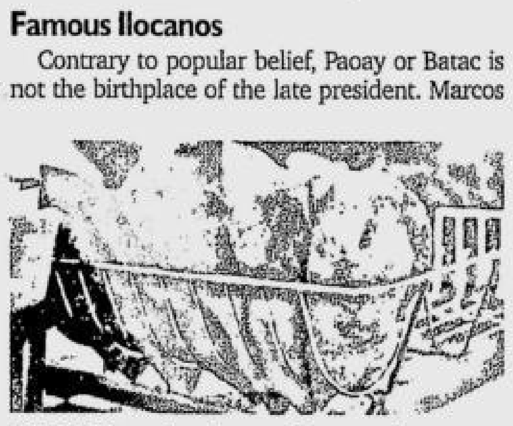
Famous Ilocanos

Contrary to popular belief, Paoay or Batac is not the birthplace of the late president. Marcos was really born in the town of Sarrat.

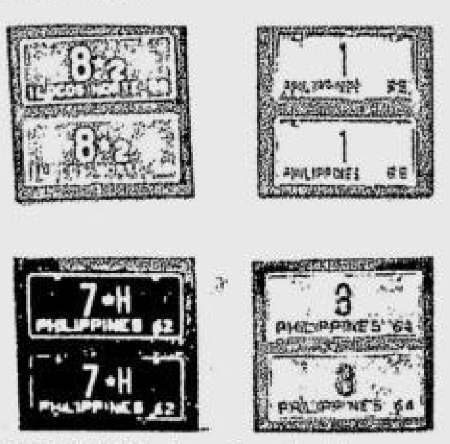

THE CHURCH that launched a thousand postcards


HISTORY at the Luna house

EXPLORING the Luna house


ILOCOS in a pie... Ilocano Empanada

SPICY? *Adobo?* **Cheese?** *Cornik* **"buffet table" at Laoag market**



PRESIDENTIAL plates from the Marcos Museum

But it is in Batac where you will find the Marcos Museum, which houses interesting items such as the old presidential car plates, his barong suits and his old presidential desk.

You can also view the allegedly preserved body of the former President in the refrigerated crypt inside the Marcos mausoleum next door.

But the most famous Ilocano son born in Batac would be Gregorio Aglipay, founder of the Philippine Independent Church, or the Aglipayan Church. His shrine is in Batac.

Another famous son of Ilocos is Juan Luna y Novicio born in the town of Badoc. Admirers of the great painter can visit the Luna House, a two-story brick house filled with memorabilia and reproductions of his popular paintings.

Tastes of Ilocos

Near the Marcos Museum is a strip of sidewalk eateries, or the Empanadahan sa Plaza, where you can have your fill of the famous Ilocano Empanada or *halo-halo*.

Though you can bring home some of the orange delicacies or buy from Taco Ilocano in Makati, nothing beats the real thing, so be sure to enjoy as many hot pieces of *empanada* dipped in special *suka*.

Apart from *empanada*, you can bring home *chichacorn* and *bagnet*, which can be found almost everywhere.

Chichacorn is abundant in the "Corniks" center in Paoay but you can find both in the remarkably clean Laoag market. To bargain effectively, remember the phrases "Nagnginan!" (for "expensive!") and "Awan tawar nan" (for "No discount?").

Also try the *pinakbet* of Café Teresa of Pallazo de Laoag where those who often pass on veggies can enjoy the dish because of the special recipe.

Beach out

Another must in Ilocos, especially for those who worship the sun and can't get enough of the sea, is Pagudpud. Its white sand, clear water and the best part—less people traffic and noise pollution—make Pagudpud a destination for bona fide beach bums. It is also a site for scuba diving and kayaking (in Bulu river).

Many sights in the Ilocos look familiar, thanks to numerous television shows and movies' choice of locations.

Cinematic sights, like the century-old lighthouse Cape Bojeador in Burgos, evoke romance.

Meanwhile, the windmills of Bangui is perfect for your action or sci-fi movie.

For "Panday" fans, the sand dunes near Fort Ilocandia resort will make you wish you brought your plastic sword along.

Many people take Ilocos Norte for granted because of the popularity of the old churches. But now you know that the region has more to offer than heritage sites and hot weather.

For many of those who discover there is a little of Ilocano in them (read: *kuripot* or stingy), there is an alternative to have the Ilocandia experience without breaking the bank.

Cebu Pacific, the low-fare, great-value airline, has added Laoag to its domestic-flight service.

Now you can have the luxury of time, great service and the Ilocandia experience with Cebu Pacific, which flies three times a week to the Ilocos for fares as low as P568 (exclusive of tax and surcharges) one way.

With Cebu Pacific's GO Fares promo, be sure to book early for a lower fare. You can book now just in time for the fiestas of Bacarra (Nov. 27-30) and Batac (Dec. 8-31).

For more information, visit www.cebupacificair.com. *Adayo?* (How far?) Not too far!

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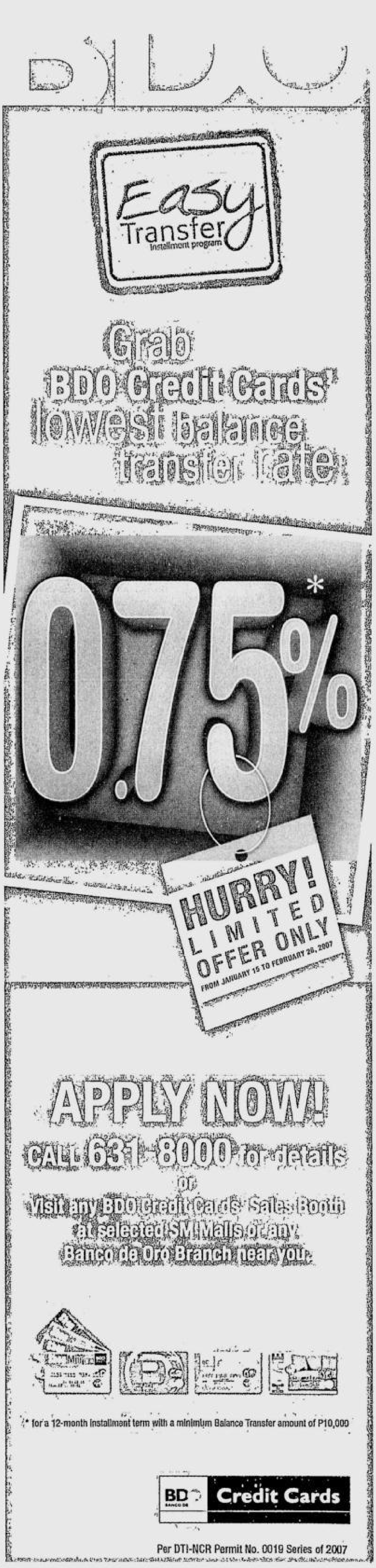
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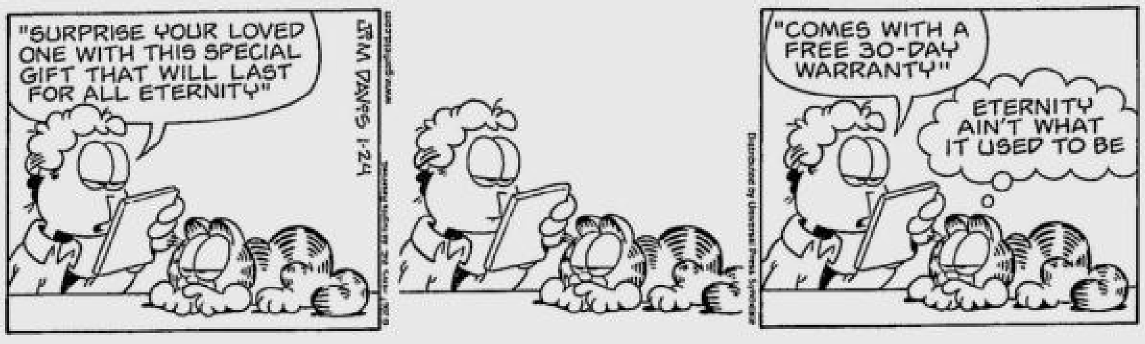
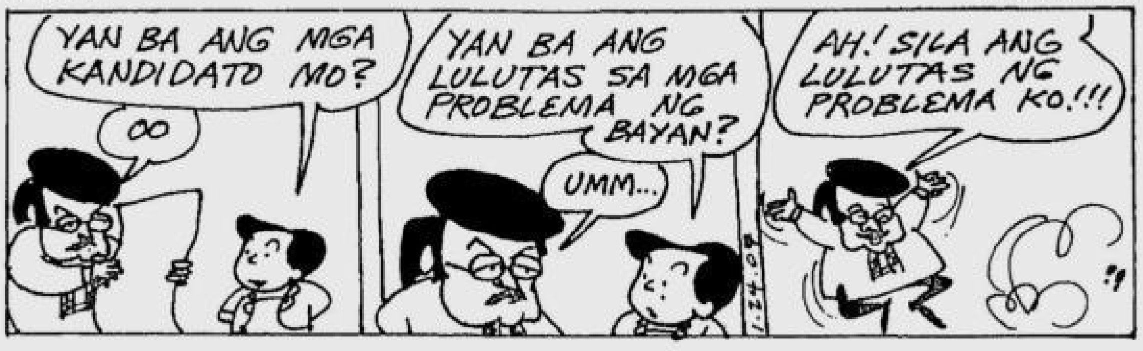
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


"SURPRISE YOUR LOVED ONE WITH THIS SPECIAL GIFT THAT WILL LAST FOR ALL ETERNITY"
JIM DAVIS 1-24
"COMES WITH A FREE 30-DAY WARRANTY"
ETERNITY AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

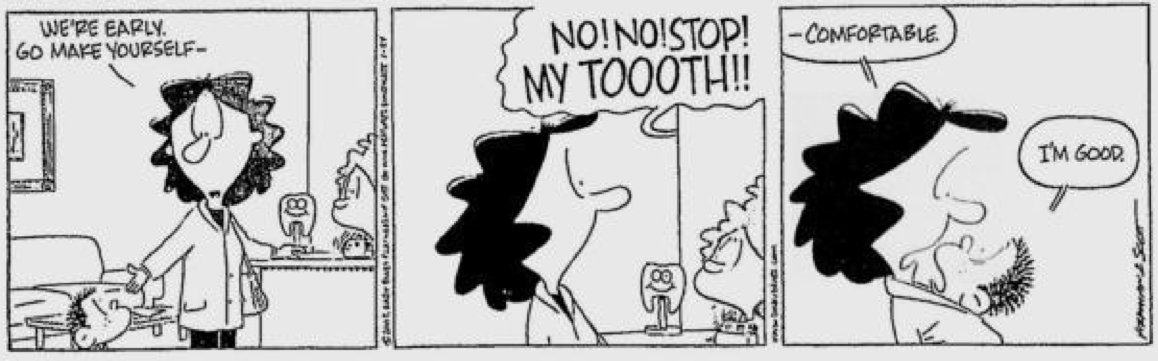
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


YAN BA ANG MGA KANDIDATO MO?
OO
YAN BA ANG LULUTAS SA MGA PROBLEMA NG BAYAN?
UMM...
AH! SILA ANG LULUTAS NG PROBLEMA KO.!!!

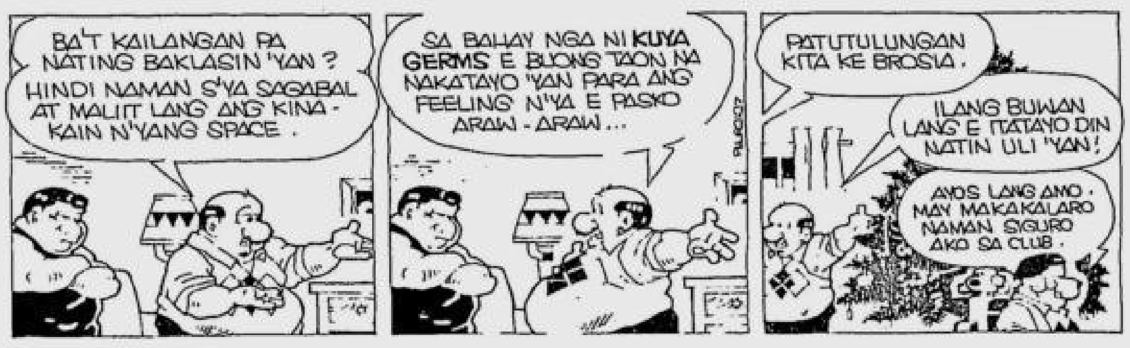
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WE'RE EARLY. GO MAKE YOURSELF–
NO! NO! STOP! MY TOOOTH!!
–COMFORTABLE.
I'M GOOD.

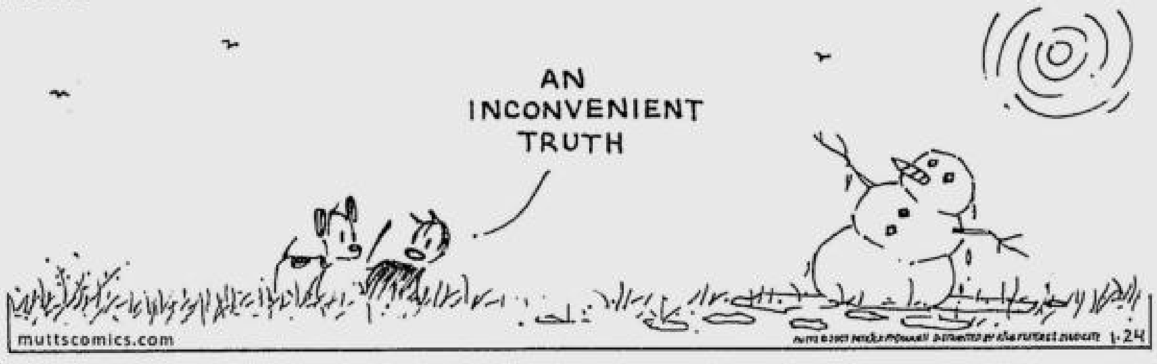
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


BA'T KAILANGAN PA NATING BAKLASIN 'YAN? HINDI NAMAN S'YA SAGABAL AT MALIIT LANG ANG KINA-KAIN N'YANG SPACE.
SA BAHAY NGA NI KUYA GERMS E BUONG TAON NA NAKATAYO 'YAN PARA ANG FEELING N'YA E PASKO ARAW-ARAW...
PATUTULUNGAN KITA KE BROSIA.
ILANG BUWAN LANG E ITATAYO DIN NATIN ULI 'YAN!
AYOS LANG AMO. MAY MAKAKALARO NAMAN SIGURO AKO SA CLUB.

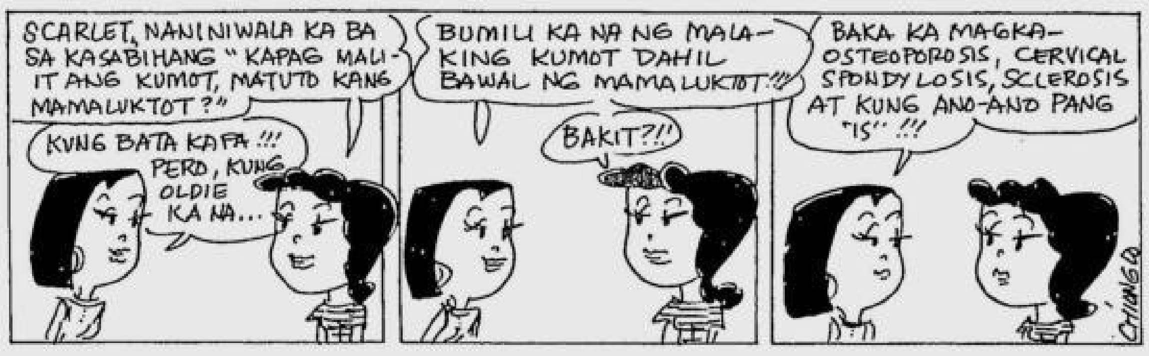
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
muttscomics.com
1-24

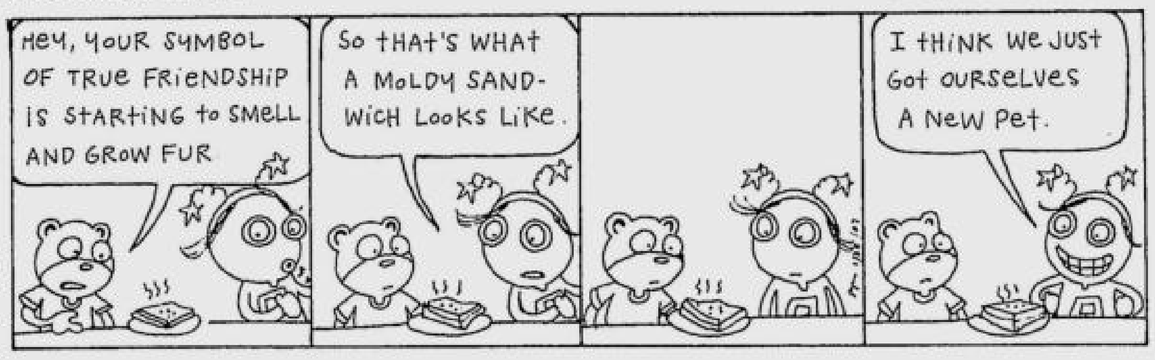
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SCARLET, NANINIWALA KA BA SA KASABIHANG "KAPAG MALIIT ANG KUMOT, MATUTO KANG MAMALUKTOT?"
KUNG BATA KA PA!!! PERO, KUNG OLDIE KA NA...
BUMILI KA NA NG MALAKING KUMOT DAHIL BAWAL NG MAMALUKTOT!!!
BAKIT?!!
BAKA KA MAGKA-OSTEOPOROSIS, CERVICAL SPONDYLOSIS, SCLEROSIS AT KUNG ANO-ANO PANG "IS"!!!
CHIONGLO

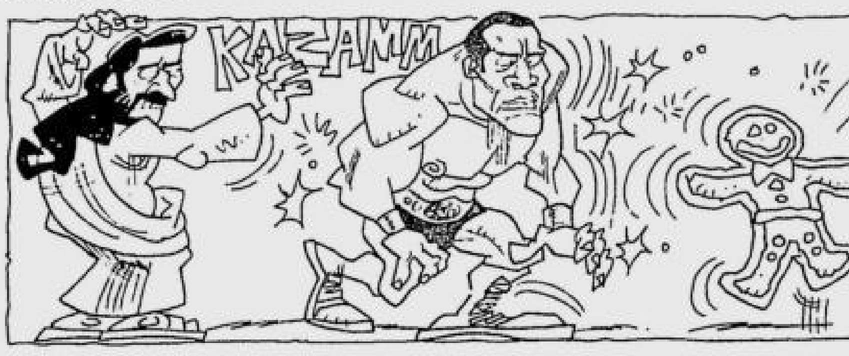
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HEY, YOUR SYMBOL OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP IS STARTING TO SMELL AND GROW FUR
SO THAT'S WHAT A MOLDY SANDWICH LOOKS LIKE.
I THINK WE JUST GOT OURSELVES A NEW PET.

DIVINE COMEDY

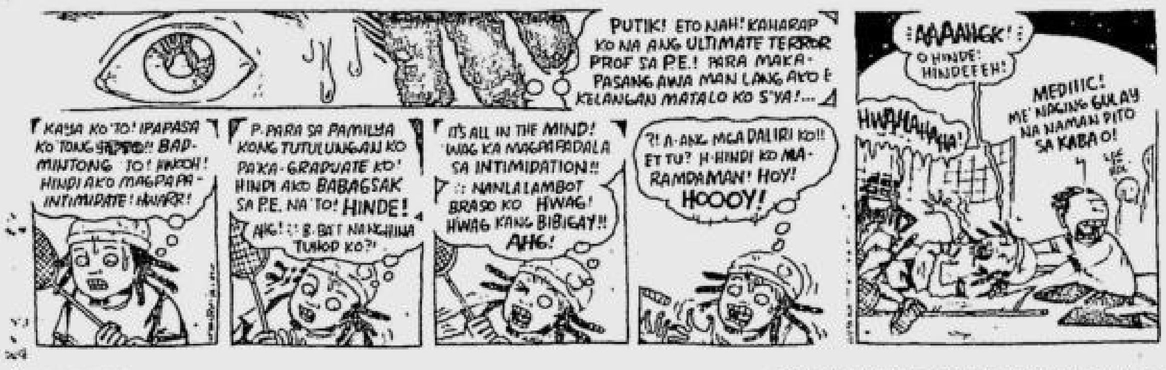
BY STEVEN PABALINAS



AT MINSAN NA NAMANG NASUBUKAN ANG GALING NI JESUS SA MGA MILAGRO NANG GINAWA NYANG GINGERBREAD MAN SI "THE ROCK"

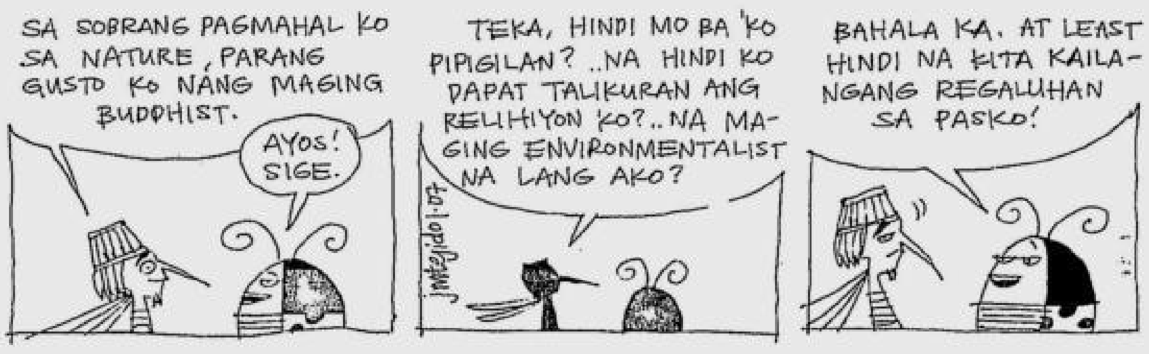
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


PUTIK! ETO NAH! KAHARAP KO NA ANG ULTIMATE TERROR PROF SA P.E.! PARA MAKA-PASANG AWA MAN LANG AKO E KELANGAN MATALO KO S'YA!...
KAYA KO 'TO! IPAPASA KO 'TONG BAD-MINTONG 'TO! HNGOH! HINDI AKO MAGPAPA-INTIMIDATE! HNARR!
P-PARA SA PAMILYA KONG TUTULUNGAN KO PAKA-GRADUATE KO! HINDI AKO BABAGSAK SA P.E. NA 'TO! HINDE!
AHG! B-BAT NANGHIHINA TUHOD KO?!
IT'S ALL IN THE MIND! 'WAG KA MAGPAPADALA SA INTIMIDATION!!
NANLALAMBOT BRASO KO HWAG! HWAG KANG BIBIGAY!! AHG!
?! A-ANG MGA DALIRI KO!! ET TU? H-HINDI KO MA-RAMDAMAN! HOY! HOOOY!
AAAAHCK!
O HINDE! HINDEEEH!
HWAHAHAHA!
MEDIIIC! ME' NAGING GULAY NA NAMAN PITO SA KABA O!

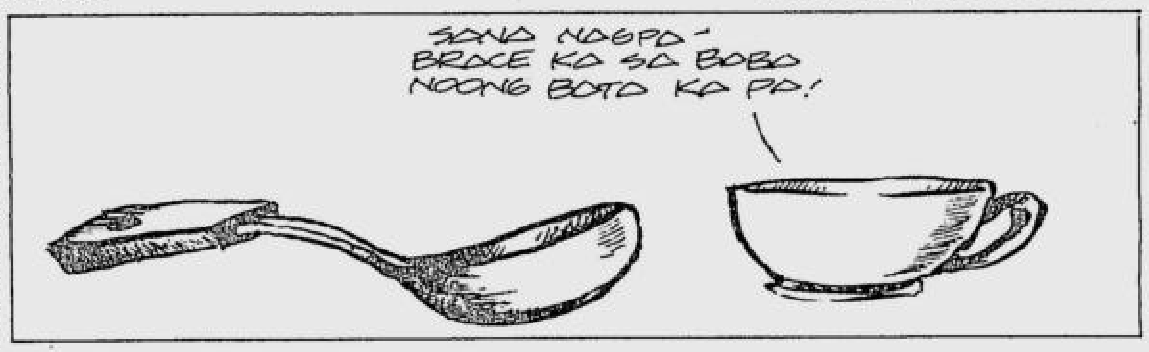
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SA SOBRANG PAGMAHAL KO SA NATURE, PARANG GUSTO KO NANG MAGING BUDDHIST.
AYOS! SIGE.
TEKA, HINDI MO BA 'KO PIPIGILAN? ..NA HINDI KO DAPAT TALIKURAN ANG RELIHIYON KO?..NA MAGING ENVIRONMENTALIST NA LANG AKO?
BAHALA KA. AT LEAST HINDI NA KITA KAILANGANG REGALUHAN SA PASKO!

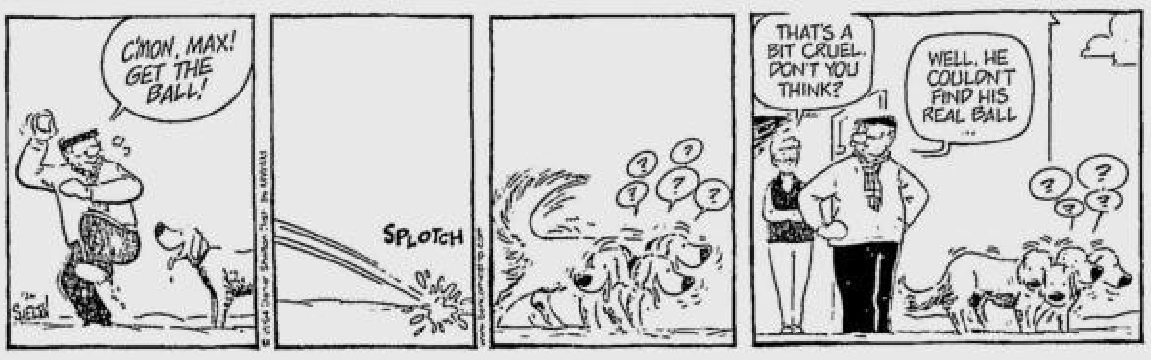
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

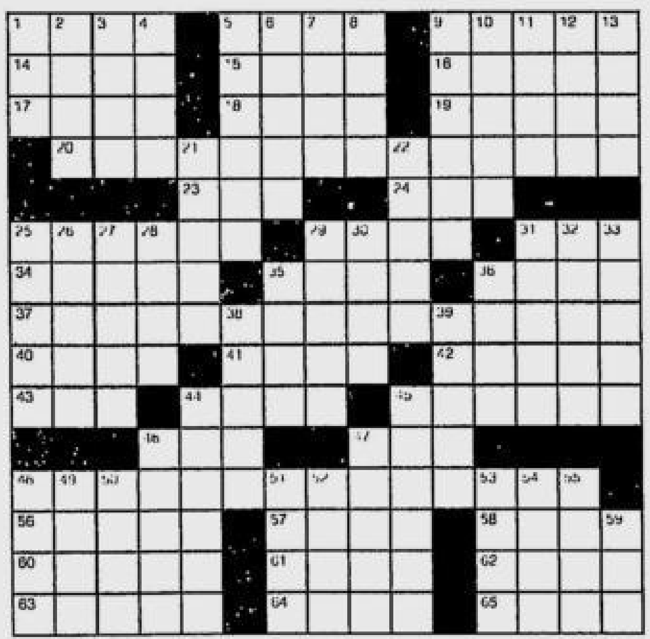

SANA NAGPA-BRACE KA SA BOBO NOONG BATA KA PA!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


C'MON, MAX! GET THE BALL!
SPLOTCH
THAT'S A BIT CRUEL. DON'T YOU THINK?
WELL, HE COULDN'T FIND HIS REAL BALL
...

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

1/24/07

ACROSS

1 Alaskan port
5 Elec. measures
9 Matt of "Good Will Hunting"
14 Trib's viewpoint page
15 Actor Coward
16 Minneapolis suburb
17 Comic Carvey
18 Mrs. Dithers of "Blondie"
19 Feels concern
20 Star of 37A and 48A
23 Lobster eggs
24 Deli bread
25 Minister
29 Aunts in Leon
31 Bud
34 Sports turf type
35 Gandhi's wrap
36 Actress Andersson
37 Film starring 20A
40 Abound
41 Uganda's Idi
42 I give up!
43 Tourist's stopover
44 Prepare for publication
45 Lustrous fabric
46 "Float like a butterfly" boxer
47 Swiss river
48 Film starring 20A
56 Slightly daffy
57 Actor Epps
58 Almost all
60 Director Woody
61 Fork part
62 Robert of "The Sopranos"
63 "Harlem Nights" co-star Della
64 Handy list-ender
65 Conservative in Britain

DOWN

1 Soundless agreement
2 Colorful fish
3 Diner handout
4 Dutch cheese
5 Newsroom honcho
6 Demi or Dudley
7 Henri's pop
8 Do in, like a dragon
9 Misleading attractions
10 Old saying
11 Actress Sorvino
12 Nonpareil
13 Anti-Tweed cartoonist
21 Detective's quest
22 Smart guy
25 Page of music
26 Pale
27 Dutch genre painter
28 Collier's cart
29 Unspoken
30 OPEC member
31 Jigsaw unit
32 White poplar
33 Type of closet
35 California valley
36 Sacrifice play
38 Wheel spokes, e.g.
39 Two pints
44 Comic Booster
45 Horse mackerel
46 Top points
47 Maytag rival
48 Skiers' ride
49 _ _-Bopp comet
50 Vogue rival
51 Written reminder
52 Give forth
53 Not orig.
54 __ contendere
55 River of Flanders
59 Attempt

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

A	L	A	M	O	■	C	A	T	O	■	L	A	I	D
N	A	T	A	L	■	B	A	I	L	■	E	L	S	E
S	M	O	K	E	S	C	R	E	E	N	T	E	S	T
A	P	P	E	A	R	■	■	T	O	E	■	R	U	E
■	■	■	U	T	O	P	I	A	■	A	S	T	E	R
S	W	I	P	E	■	E	N	C	O	R	E	■	■	■
O	E	D	■	■	B	E	D	■	V	E	N	I	A	L
F	L	O	W	E	R	P	O	W	E	R	T	R	I	P
A	L	L	E	L	E	■	O	A	R	■	■	A	N	G
■	■	■	A	S	T	E	R	N	■	S	A	N	T	A
A	P	A	R	T	■	U	S	E	F	U	L	■	■	■
S	I	R	■	O	U	R	■	■	U	P	B	E	A	T
C	A	B	I	N	F	E	V	E	R	P	I	T	C	H
A	N	O	N	■	O	K	I	E	■	E	N	T	R	E
P	O	R	K	■	S	A	I	L	■	R	O	U	E	N

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1/24/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a shrewd observer of the human condition. You're also extremely charismatic; you magnetize others to you. (People just admire you.) You work hard and do not welcome distractions. People around you need to understand this. You enjoy your popularity with friends. Nevertheless, seek out some privacy this year so that you can study or learn something new.

Birthdate of: Neil Diamond, singer; Mischa Barton, actress; Nastassja Kinski, actress

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today the Moon is in your sign, giving you just a little extra in terms of good luck and opportunities. Make the most of this! You should also be aware that this makes you a bit more emotional than usual as well. (Oops.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Work behind the scenes or work alone today if you can. Go home early. Try to grab a nap. You need more rest than usual.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): A female friend has some advice for you. A good chin-wag with someone is in order. Have a heart-to-heart talk with someone who needs to get something off his or her chest.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Conversations with bosses, parents and teachers are particularly significant today. People notice you for some reason, and they will seek you out. It's all good!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Publishing, the media, travel and dealing with foreign countries might catch your attention today. Try to do something different and out of the ordinary. You need a little adventure.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day to take care of red-tape details regarding inheritances, insurance matters and bills. Do what you can; you'll feel relieved afterward.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Today the Moon is opposite your sign. Because of this, you might feel that others oppose you for some reason. Actually, this is merely your perception of things. Chill out.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Take 30 minutes out of your day to reorganize yourself at work or at home. If you do this, you'll love yourself for it afterward.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a lovely day to play and enjoy yourself with others. Watch some sports, catch a movie or make a date with your main squeeze.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your attention turns to home and family matters today. Conversations with a parent could be significant. You might need to hide at home to pull your act together.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Take care of little details, like shopping, running errands and talking to neighbors and relatives. Scratch a few things off your to-do list.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): If you go shopping today, you'll want to buy practical, long-lasting items. You feel rather sensible about your finances right now. You want to feel on top of things!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			7	8	4			
		2				4		
	5	6				8	3	
5								4
9								3
	1	8	3		5	7	9	
			8		9			
		1				9		
		4	6	1	7	5		

Difficulty Level ★★★

1/24

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	8	1	5	6	7	9	2	4
6	9	4	3	2	1	5	8	7
7	5	2	8	4	9	3	6	1
5	1	7	9	8	3	6	4	2
2	4	9	1	5	6	8	7	3
8	3	6	2	7	4	1	9	5
4	7	8	6	3	5	2	1	9
1	6	3	7	9	2	4	5	8
9	2	5	4	1	8	7	3	6

Difficulty Level ★★

Flip-flopping

From page C6

It doesn't hurt that they're cute, too—Havaianas come in all colors you can possibly imagine, ranging from bright neons to metallic hues. Some are embellished with Swarovski, while others come in cartoon designs.

Because of Havaianas, flip-flops have become respectable footwear. No longer limited to the house or the beach, they can be worn to the mall, groceries, restaurants and even some bars.

While there are a few understandably snooty establishments that don't allow flip-flops inside, you can rest assured knowing that your Havaianas will take you almost anywhere you want—in comfort and style.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com.

Longest kiss and other Pinoy superlatives

FOR FILIPINOS, WORLD RECORDS are serious business. In the last three years alone for example, at least 20 large-scale successful world record attempts were made by Filipinos.

From the country that gave birth to the woman with the world's biggest shoe collection also comes the biggest pair of shoes in the world.

Displayed in the country's shoe capital, Marikina City, the P2 million pair of cordovan leather wingtips measures 18.2-feet long and 7.4-feet wide each. Made by 10 master shoemakers from the city, the shoe can simultaneously accommodate the feet of 30 Imelda Marcoses.

Filipino attempts at world records reflect how very cause-oriented we are as a people. Worried about the worsening condition of the environment, thousands of Filipinos planted 620,000 seedlings all over the country to make the Philippines a little greener and set a new record for the biggest tree-planting campaign in the world.

When 3,738 Filipina mothers set a new record for the world's largest breast-feeding gathering on May 4, 2006, the nation also took a stand against infant malnutrition.

Filipinos also made a call against pet cruelty when 500,000 dogs gathered in different spots in the country, setting a new record for largest canine assembly in the world.

Aside from breaking world records, eating is also one of the Filipinos' greatest obsessions. Combining this with record-breaking moments, Filipinos set records for the longest barbecue grill (3-km long), biggest strawberry cake (made from 2,000 kilos of strawberry), longest *bico* (195-meters long) and largest rice cake (which weighed 2,547 kilos) in the world.

Filipinos have never been thought of as the most health-conscious of people, but this is apparently changing.

On Feb. 16, 2003, 48,188 Filipinos trooped to Luneta Park in their sweatpants and trainers to establish a new record in the "Largest Aerobics Demonstration/Class" category and work on getting the "buns of steel" Jane Fonda was raving about in the '80s.

Longest kiss

Filipinos are thought to be among the most romantic people in the world, and this was proven true when, in 2004 at an event dubbed CloseUp Lovapalooza, 5,237 Filipino couples locked lips for 10 seconds and broke the Guiness World Record previously held by Chile for the most number of couples kissing simultaneously.

Unfortunately, Hungary topped the feat. (Who knew the Hungarians had it in them? Even France could only gather more than a thousand couples.)

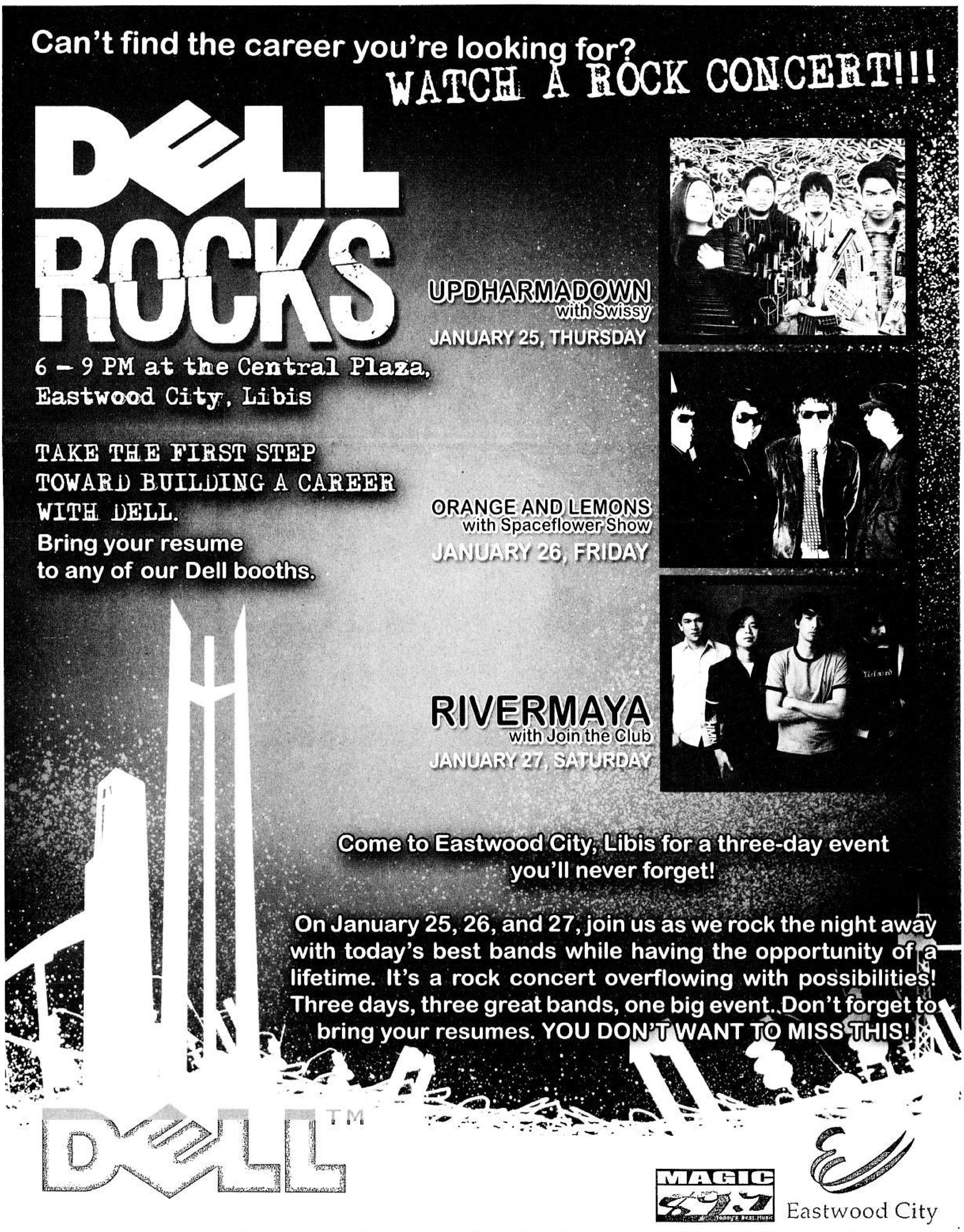
Not one to be daunted, Filipinos will attempt to steal the World Record again!

On Feb.10, thousands of Filipinos couples will convene at SM Mall of Asia for CloseUp Lovapalooza 2007, to prove to the world that when it comes to the romance department, no one tops Pinoys.

CloseUp, which also once set a record for the world's largest photo-mosaic (last 2005), said it is committed to giving Filipinos the biggest Valentine celebration of the year with CloseUp Lovapalooza.

For some, Filipinos' seeming obsession with world records reflects the their desire for instant recognition. But for most Filipinos, the world-record titles we hold symbolize unity and pride.

As Paul Katimbang, brand manager of CloseUp, said: "Filipino pride is at stake here. Being able to regain the record sends the message that Filipinos don't take defeat sitting down and we fight to keep our victories. But more important, it shows the world that with a little will and hard work, Filipinos can achieve whatever they want."



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Sneakerheads, unite

A NIKE fan with his precious pair

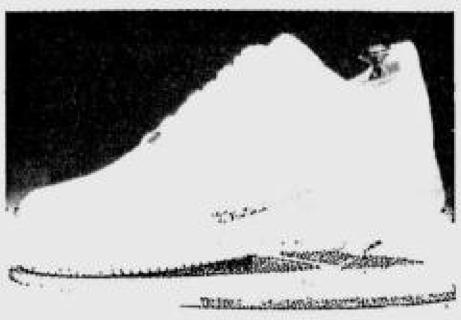
ANOTHER PIECE OF BASKETBALL history was made when sneakerheads, athletes and hip-hop aficionados gathered for one night of love, in celebration of the 25th year of the iconic Nike Air Force 1.

For this 25th anniversary, Nike honored those who made the Air Force 1 what it is and continue to define it, and they all came together in respect for the legendary shoe that defined basketball and street culture.

Manila's top DJ SkratchMark gave a 25-year music retrospective to mark the 25-year legacy of the Air Force 1.

Making of an icon

In 1982, basketball needed more than another page in the book of footwear. It needed a new chapter in the epic of the game itself. Basketball needed the kind of evolution that occurs when innovation and vision collide with respect.



NIKE Air Force 1 in Anaconda Skin

Air Force 1 was one of the most popular Nike shoes ever created. It was the first performance basketball shoe to incorporate Nike Air cushioning technology and since its debut, the Air Force 1 has become a shoe that epitomized what the sport of basketball means to those who love it. It has become an integral part of the culture that surrounds the game—an innovative performance product and a cultural icon.

Embraced and revered by the basketball community, the Air Force 1 made an impact that was felt way beyond its hardcourt roots. The shoe was created for basketball. It was adopted by the basketball community and then progressed into a culture.

In celebration of the Air Force 1, 2007 will see the introduction of a new innovative performance basketball shoe, the Air Force 25. The Air Force 25 will be worn by some of the new generation of great players. Built upon the same craftsmanship and informed design principles as the Air Force 1, the Air Force 25 delivers revolutionary era within the Air Force story.

Tomorrow, the Force experience continues at the Nike Air Force Space at the Manila DJ's Club (MDC), The Fort, Taguig City, where a collection of unique models of Air Force 1's will be on display from key collectors. The space will also be a hub of information for the 25 years of the Force.

For more information, log on to www.nike.com.ph

A SNEAKERHEAD and his prized possession

Drops of Life

REPLENISH WITH EVERY DROP

Proper hydration means getting the right amount of liquids into our bodies. It is an important aspect of our health, as we simply cannot function properly without constantly replenishing lost fluids. In normal conditions, thirst is our guide to know when it's time to hydrate. However, what our bodies can't tell us is what beverage to drink.

REFRESH YOUR BODY WITH EVERY DROP OF COKE

Recent health studies have shown that all beverages hydrate the body, so it is more a matter of quantity than a specific drink. Choose beverages that you enjoy. And what can be more enjoyable than an ice-cold Coca-Cola? Always keep a beverage within your reach. Keep one at your desk, your car, or your bag, for a quick quench. Our bodies absorb all the water it can from whatever we take in, which means that it naturally makes every drop of Coke a valuable contribution to proper hydration.

MAKE EVERY DROP COUNT

Make sure that everything you eat and drink boosts your health because when it comes to hydration, your body makes every drop count. Grab a Coke and raise a toast to a hydrated body. We at The Coca-Cola Company live to provide you with every product that will satisfy your different and changing hydration needs. We understand that you make every drop of your efforts count, and our role is to keep you enabled in meeting your desires. We make every drop count, for you.

HYDRATION IS NOT ALWAYS SPELLED

alth
hydrat you. Now you
of water with all the stuf that shes rat
be spelled as Get every ack

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

Feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Sounds like 'putik'

By Nini Valera

IT SHOULDN'T TAKE a lip reader to figure out the four-letter word that "Starstruck" contestant Jesi Corcuera uttered when her name was called as one of the reality talent show's survivors on Sunday.

"Fortunately, there was no audio, and she raised her arm, which covered her mouth as she said the word. So we couldn't tell [for sure] if [it was] a [cuss-word] or a derivative of it," said Janine Nacar, production manager of "Starstruck The Next Level."

"It could have been *'putik,'*" Nacar added.

Corcuera, 16, was at the bottom list of the survivors last week, having been voted off by seven of the contestants for being incorrigible and "not trying her best."

Text votes from the viewers of the popular talent search aired on GMA 7 saved Corcuera, a self-confessed lesbian, from being eliminated.

SOUNDS/ D2

DEX Quindoza eliminated from "Starstruck"

RP dancer on National Geographic

THE PHILIPPINES' gold medalist in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games (2005), Belinda Adora, above, is featured in National Geographic Channel's "ShowReal Asia: Strictly Asian Ballroom," premiering on Jan. 28, 9 p.m.

Adora says of the special report: "This program is a testament that dancing … can truly bridge different and contrasting cultures."

Replays on Feb. 4, 3 p.m.; Feb. 5, 5 p.m.

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by Raya Martin at 4PM!

TODO TODO TEROS
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MTRCB Rating: R18

january 24 - 30

Set in the minefields of modern suburbia, this film follows several inhabitants of a small American town as they fumble their way through adulthood. Numb-to-life housewife and mother Sarah Pierce (Kate Winslet) finds an outlet for her yearning in gorgeous househusband Brad Adamson (Patrick Wilson), who is crippled with insecurity over the fact that his perfect wife, Kathy (Jennifer Connely) is the family breadwinner.

When Sarah and Brad meet at the local playground one afternoon, a passionate affair is sparked. In a further attempt to reclaim his youthful fire, Brad joins a night football league with Larry Hedges (Noah Emmerich), a former cop who has begun to harass a convicted sex offender, Ronnie J. McGorvey (Jackie Earle Haley). The trouble lives eventually collide, causing each individual to take full responsibility for their not-so-responsible actions. It is bitingly funny and nakedly honest, critique of middle class dysfunction.

For Screening Schedule, please contact our Cinema Access: 635-5555 or visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

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5 BABEL
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7 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
8 ERAGON
9 ROB-B-HOOD
10 AGENT X44

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
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2 AGENT X44
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 DEJA VU
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 ERAGON
6 BABEL
7 LITTLE CHILDREN

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SAW 3
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6 DEJA VU
7 AGENT X44
8 ROB-B-HOOD

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5 KAMASUTRA 3
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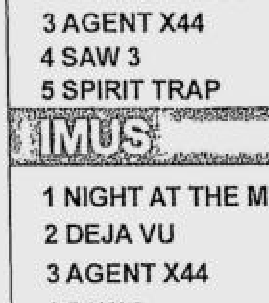

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BABEL
ROB-B-HOOD
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
ERAGON
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AGENT X44
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CINEMA 1
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SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
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AGENT X44
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
ENTENG KABISOTE 3
BLOOD DIAMOND
AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
ERAGON
AGENT X44
GRIDIRON GANG
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
DEJA VU
ROB-B-HOOD
BLOOD DIAMOND
ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
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ROB-B-HOOD
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AGENT X44

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
AGENT X44
DEJA VU
BABEL
ERAGON
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
ROB-B-HOOD
BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
AGENT X44
ERAGON

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
BABEL
DEJA VU
BLOOD DIAMOND
ERAGON
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AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
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GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
AGENT X44
SPIRIT TRAP

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
ERAGON
AGENT X44
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ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
ROB-B-HOOD
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KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
AGENT X44
A GOOD YEAR

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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
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ERAGON
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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
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AGENT X44
ZU WARRIORS
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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
AGENT X44
ERAGON

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SHOWTIME
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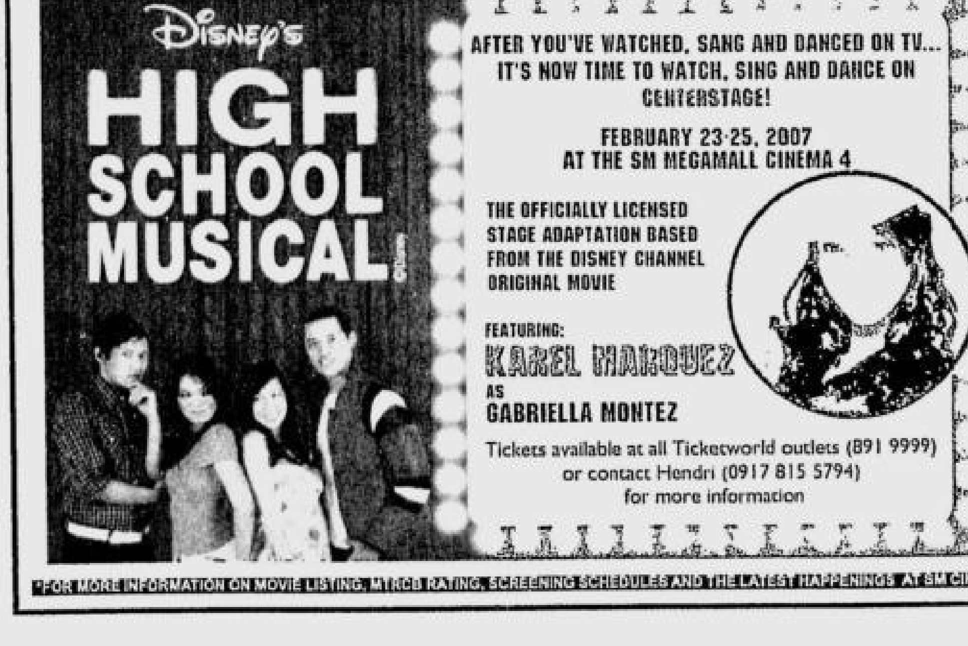

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HAZEL Uy out, too

Sounds like 'putik'

From page D1

On the other hand, the lack of text votes from the audience ended the dream of stardom for Hazel Uy and Dex Quindoza.

The two received the lowest number of text votes and were booted out of the show on Sunday.

Uy, 19, a student of the University of San Carlos in Cebu, told INQUIRER Entertainment, "From the start, I just left everything to God. I prayed that I might have a chance, but it was really up to Him."

Uy, a church choir member, is the best singer in this batch (it is the fourth year of "Starstruck"). She is also a former contestant of Miss Teen Philippines.

Devastated

Quindoza, devastated, cried backstage.

The second year student of the Philippine Maritime Institute told INQUIRER earlier that competing in the search had changed his home life drastically.

"My father was a womanizer, and the atmosphere in our house was very tense," he said. "Everything changed when I made it to 'Starstruck.' My family became united, and my father became very supportive of me."

Quindoza believed he had what it took to win because he could "do a lot of things."

He said, "I can sing, I can dance, I can act. I can do all of them at the same time and I get better everyday."

Quindoza and Rich Asuncion were given the Best Kiss Award from the Kiss Flick episodes, part of the acting test last week.

First kiss

Asuncion, 17, said it was her very first kiss. Director Rico Gutierrez believed her, announcing on national television that everybody actually claimed to have never been kissed.

"But I only believe Rich," Gutierrez said.

Named Best Actor was Paulo Avelino, whom critics Butch Francisco and Floy Quintos described as a natural and instinctive actor.

Stef Prescott received the Best Actor award for her role in the comedy episode, "Bestpren."

Gutierrez gave the Director's Choice award to Jan Manual, for having been "the most improved" actor.

SHANG CINEPLEX

① NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
MTRCB GP
12.20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

② BABEL
(SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING)

③ DÉJÀ VU
MTRCB PG-13
2.00, 4.40, 7.20, 10.00

④ LITTLE CHILDREN
MTRCB R-18
1.00, 4.00, 7.00, 10.00

PREMIERE THEATRE
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
MTRCB GP
1 30, 3 55, 6 20, 8 45

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DÉJÀ VU PG13	LITTLE CHILDREN R18	BABEL

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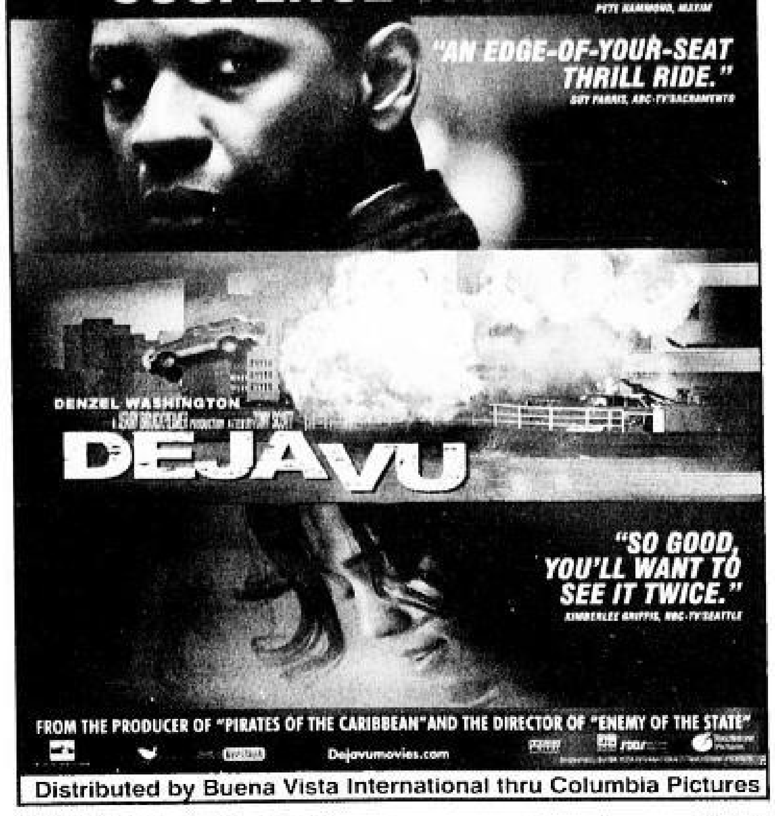
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1	DÉJÀ VU	2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:05	PG-13
2	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40, 11:05	G
3	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30	G
4	LITTLE CHILDREN	2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10	R-18

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1	ERAGON
	2	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
	3	BABEL
	4	AGENT X44
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1	BABEL
	2	DÉJÀ VU
	3 THX	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	INNOCENT VOICES
	5	STRANGER THAN FICTION
	6	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
	7	LITTLE CHILDREN
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1	BABEL
	2	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX	BABEL GUARANTEED SEATS
	2 THX	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS
	3	STRANGER THAN FICTION GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	LITTLE CHILDREN GUARANTEED SEATS
	5	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS
	2	BABEL
	3	LITTLE CHILDREN
	4	AGENT X44
	5	DÉJÀ VU
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
	2	SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
	3	ERAGON
	4	AGENT X44
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
	2	LITTLE CHILDREN
	3	DÉJÀ VU
	4	AGENT X44
	5	BABEL

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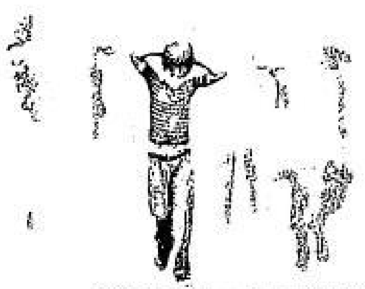

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glorietta GREENBELT TOWN MARKET! MARKET!

Turn-offs in show business

We asked some aggrieved and dissatisfied viewers and added our own grievances to come up with this list—and it's not limited to actors and singers

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA audience has the right to be served well and professionally by people in show business, but this rule is followed more in the breach than the observance. This is due to the lack of training, poor selection process and self-serving agendas that compromise the quality of "talents" in show biz.

What are some of the turn-offs in the biz? We asked some aggrieved and dissatisfied viewers and added our own grievances to come up with this list:

"Singers" who can't sing well. This is shocking in the Philippines, of all places, because every third Filipino is an outstanding vocalist! And yet, we get to hear some pretty thin or strident voices on the tube.

Blame this on the fact that *all* local stars are expected to sing during personal appearance or promo tours for their starrers, even if they can't carry a tune to save their lives.

The latest example of this is when Judy Ann Santos sang a duet with Sharon Cuneta on the Megastar's recent birthday special on TV. Judy Ann was visibly nervous and audibly rattled, but she "bravely" forged on, her thin and lackluster voice adversely affecting people's enjoyment of the otherwise fairly tuneful evening.

Stars like Judy Ann should remind themselves that they should offer the public only what they're really good at, and limit their "singing" to the bathtub or shower stall.

"Balikbayan" talents who act on local TV and in the movies even if they speak Tagalog poorly. They are consequently limited to a limited variety of roles, and end up repeating themselves much too soon.

Worse, this betrays a lack of respect for local viewers, who have the right to expect and demand competent performances.

Sure, the *tisoy* and "important" talents are learning the language—but they shouldn't do it on-camera! The current prime culprit in this regard is Sam Milby.

Celebrities who wear dark glasses in shows held indoors. Their alibi is that they've been taping or shooting all night and have eyebags the size of steamer trunks. But, we *know* that most of them are just playing show biz's sad and superficial *porma* and *siga* game. In other words: If you wear dark glasses, you're a star.

And, outdoors, if you wear dark glasses you're trying to go incognito so your ga-ga fans won't recognize you and love you to bits!—Oh, please.

Newscast anchors who are more focused on how they look than on delivering the news reports intelligently. You know the type: The women suddenly wear a lot of make-up and attention-calling hairstyles, while their male counterparts wear stuffy suits and end up looking like Mafiosi.

A key shift of focus from self to real service to viewers is decidedly in order.

In connection with this, we also wish that TV news executives do a better job. From what we see in newscasts, they don't set high enough standards for their personnel, so the TV news scene is fraught with insufficiencies and excesses.

Are some of these news bosses afraid of the "star" anchors in their employ? They should remind themselves that they're there to serve the viewers, not newscasters' stellar egos.

Too many crime stories and too few foreign news reports in local TV newscasts. TV news personnel utilize crime stories for their shock, action and melodramatic appeal, getting viewers all caught up in non-journalistic excitement. This is a no-no, because daily newscasts are supposed to help viewers learn how to appreciate and analyze the news and its consequences.

This is even more of a problem when it comes to the foreign news, which local newscasts generally avoid. The feeling is, local viewers aren't interested in what's happening in other countries.

But this disinterest and disdain shouldn't be encouraged, particularly in this age of globalization. Fully one-third of local newscasts should deal with foreign news reportage and analysis, so the Filipino can truly become a citizen of the world.

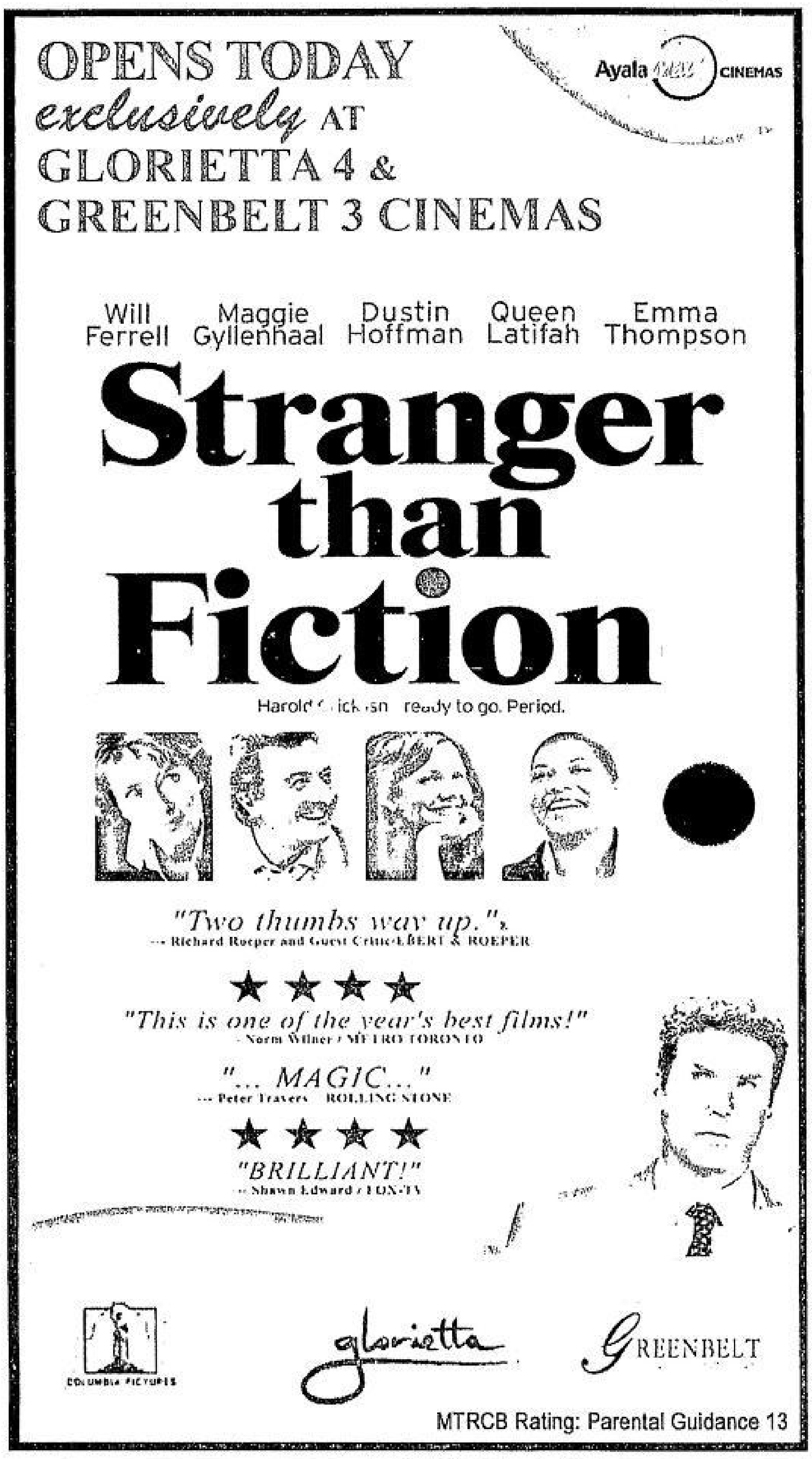
DID YOU KNOW...

Leo almost quit acting

LEONARDO DiCaprio wanted to give up acting for a time after "Titanic."

He was back to being considered "another piece of cute meat" after the 1997 film's success, an image he had wanted to get away from after his days on the cover of teen magazines, he told Newsweek for editions on newsstands this week.

"It was pretty disheartening to be objectified like that," he said, "but ... I can't say that it didn't give me opportunities. It made me, for the first time, in control of my career." *AP*



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BABEL
12:20/3:20/6:20/9:20

LITTLE CHILDREN
12:50 3:40/6:30 9:20

AGENT X-44
[illegible]

SAW 3
[illegible] 9:50

DEJAVU
[illegible] 9:50

ERAGON
[illegible]

KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
[illegible]

THE BLOOD DIAMOND
1:05 4:20/6:55/9:50

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
[illegible] 4:05/6:35/9:05

Ali MALL 5

AGENT X-44
1:55/2:05/4:15/6:25/8:35

DEJAVU
12:00/2:50/5:40/8:3[illegible]

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
12:35 3:05/5:35/8:05

LITTLE CHILDREN
12:00, 2:50/5:40/8:30

BABEL
11:30/2:30/5:30/8:30

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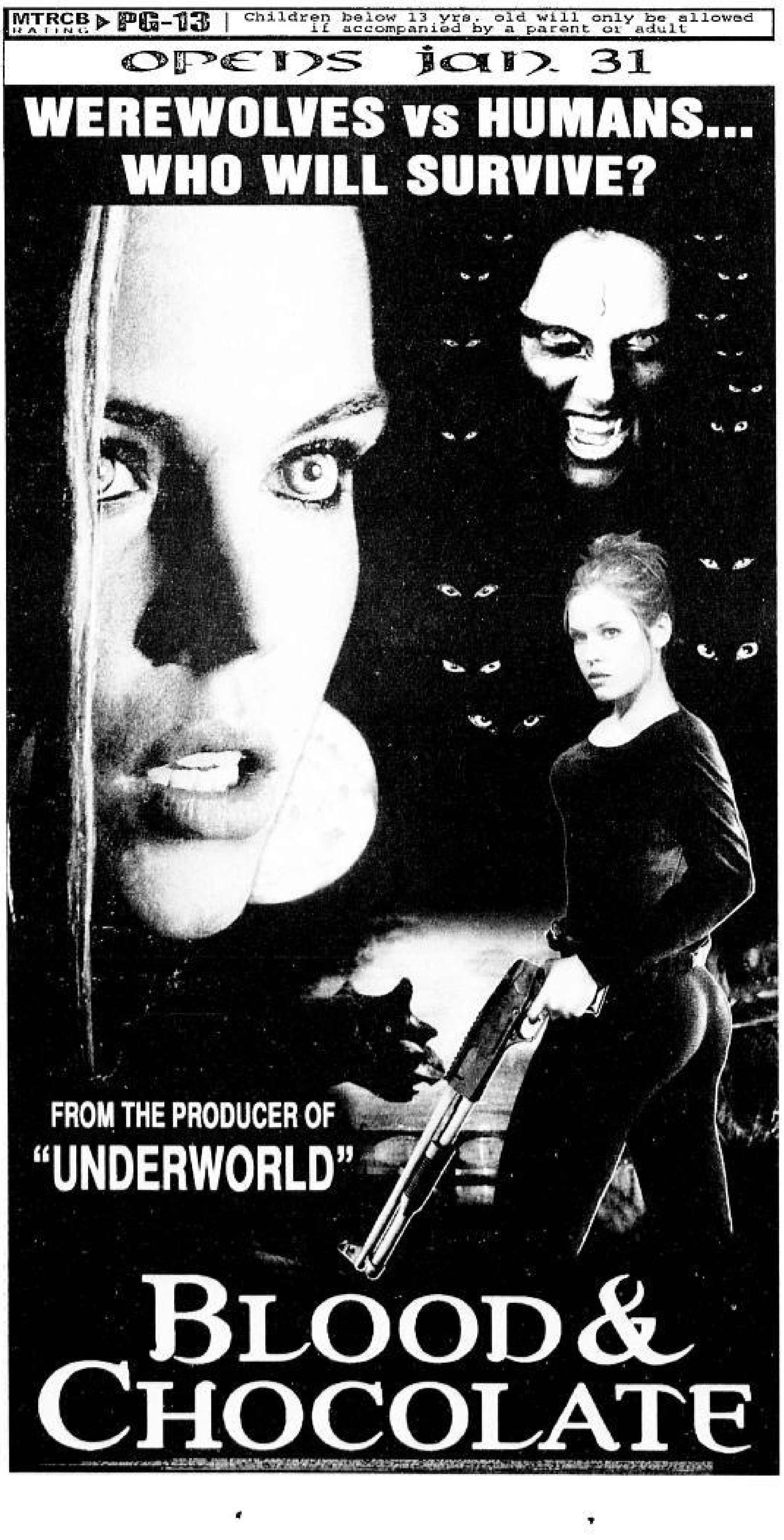


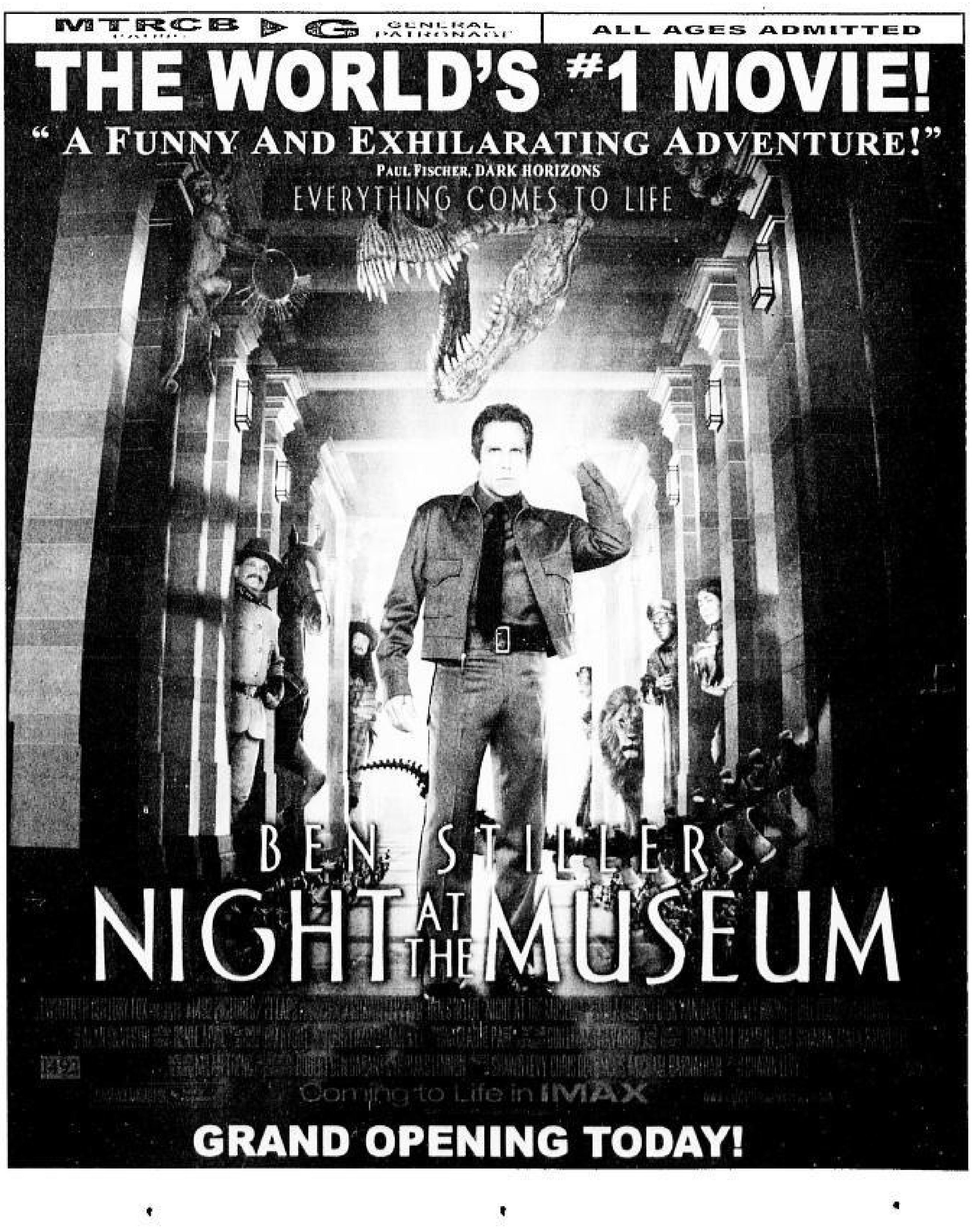
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

OPENS JAN. 31

WEREWOLVES vs HUMANS... WHO WILL SURVIVE?

FROM THE PRODUCER OF "UNDERWORLD"

BLOOD & CHOCOLATE



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CINEMA 4 BABEL
CINEMA 5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GP

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MUSIC MUSEUM

Jan. 23 , 2007	Marissa Sanchez	8:30 PM
Feb. 02 & 03 , 2007	Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby	8:30 PM
Feb. 7 & 8 , 2007	Agot Isidro "Back to Basics"	8:30 PM
Feb 13 & 14 , 2007	Ogie Alcasid	8:00 PM

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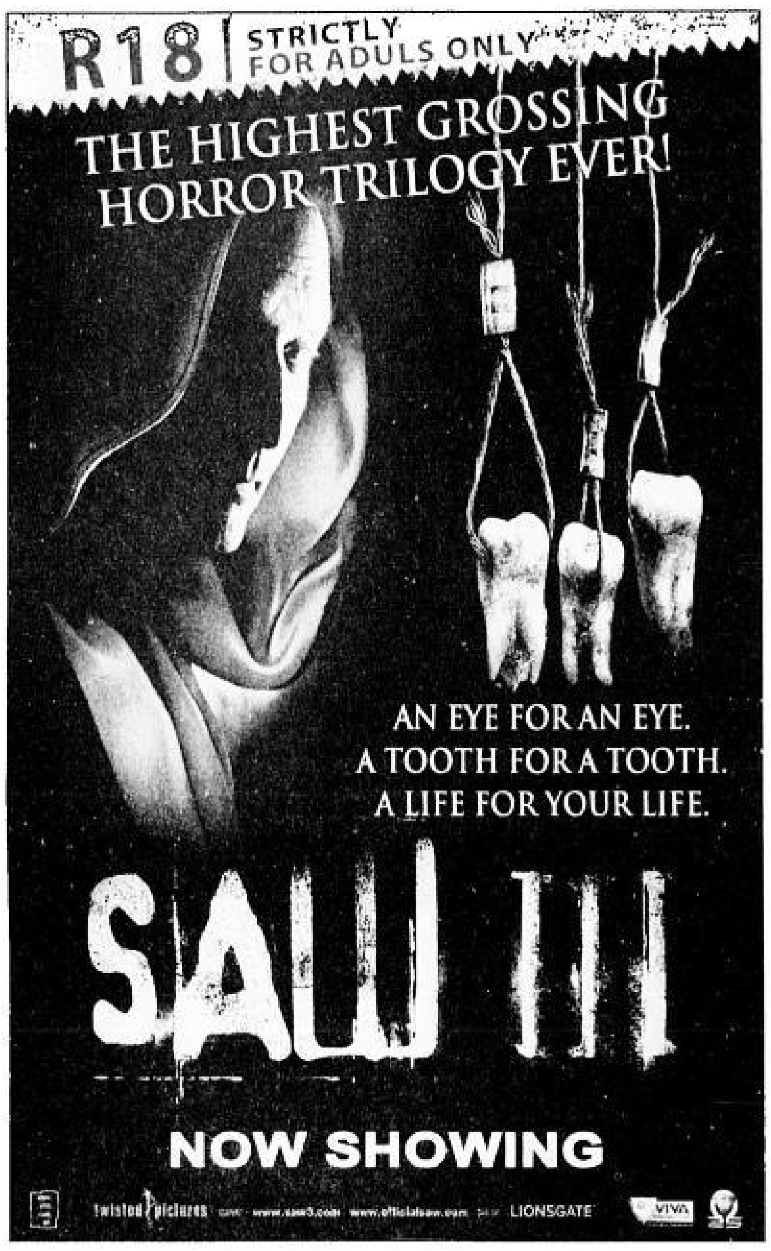

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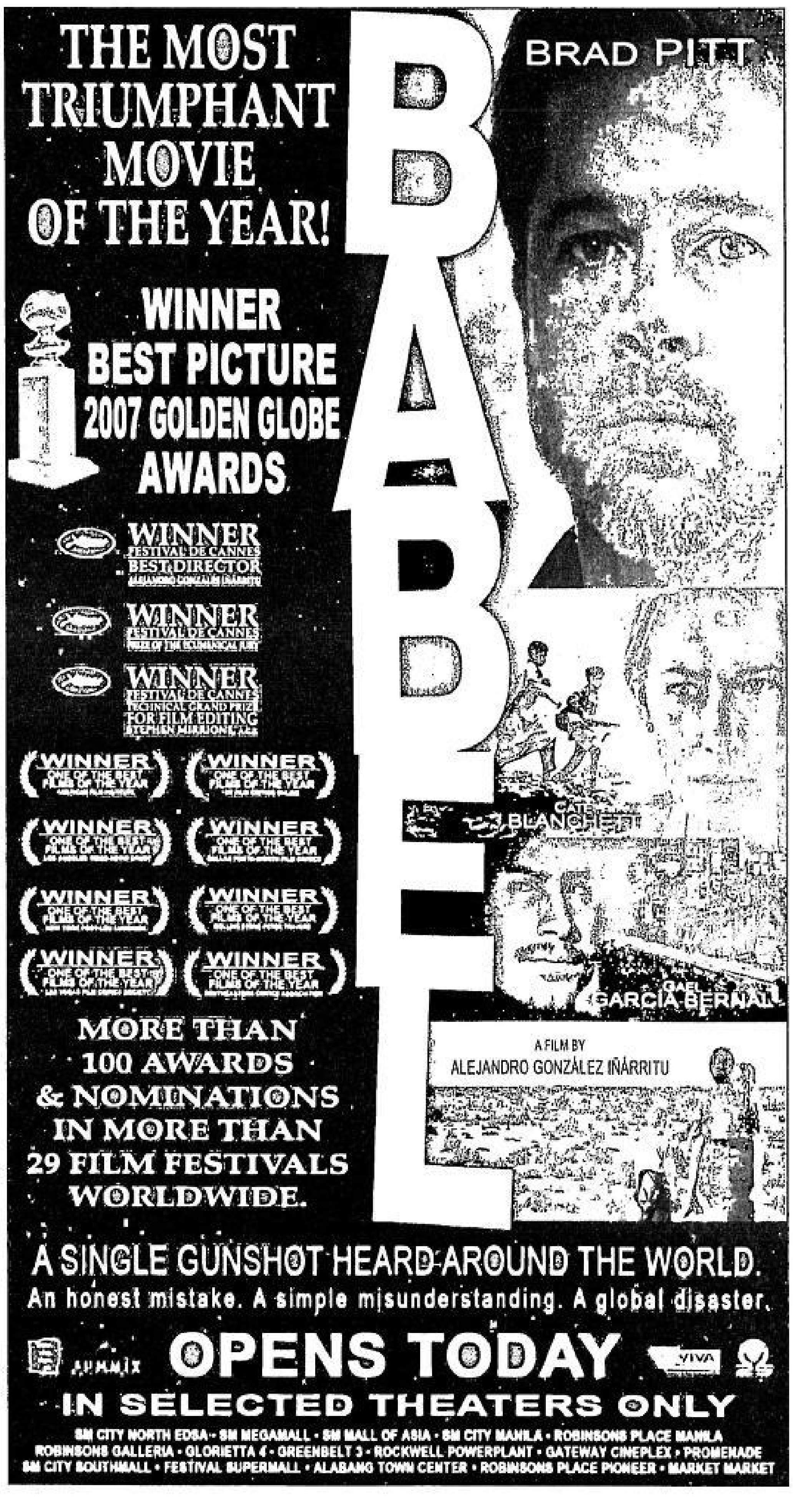
Temptation
Perversion
Deception

Little Children

Kate Winslet Jennifer Connelly Patrick Wilson

OPENS TODAY



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WINNER ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR
WINNER ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR
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6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
7 BLOOD DIAMOND
8 LITTLE CHILDREN
9 KASAL KASALI KASALO
10 AGENT X 44

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3 AGENT X 44
4 KAMASUTRA-3
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3 PLAESE CALL
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2 DÉJÀ VU

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2 TENACIOUS - D
3 KAMASUTRA-3
4 A GOOD YEAR

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3 AGENT X 44
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2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

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2 AGENT X 44
3 ERAGON

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
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2 AGENT X 44
3 DÉJÀ VU
4 ROB-B-HOOD

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 AGENT X 44
3 ROB-B-HOOD

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2 ERAGON

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2 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

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2 BAYARAN
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MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Yes, Bong Revilla has teenage son with another woman

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

AFTER HER ROW WITH DAWN Zulueta, Gretchen Barretto is in the headlines again because of her tiff with Lani Mercado. That's La Greta's style of welcoming 2007 with a bang. Whatever she says, does or wears makes news. She has that *je ne sais quoi* factor. Without her meaning to, everybody puts meaning to her moves.

Why was Greta irked? Lani said she wished Greta and Tony Boy Cojuangco would marry. Perhaps Lani meant well, but it's still a touchy matter for Greta. To get back at Lani, it seems, Greta insinuated that Bong had a kid with another woman. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Glaring eyes and sharp teeth!

Bong and Lani must forgive me. I just want to show that Lani is an ideal wife and Bong is admirable for being honest about his dishonesty. He has a teenage son, Paulo, with my friend L.G. Three years ago, he told me that he finally told Lani.

Lani met Bong's son in Bora when they happened to be on vacation there at the same time. Bong was so relieved that Lani embraced the truth and didn't love him less.

It happens to the best of families. My own dad has love children. What's important is we are good parents, whether our kids are legit or not.

It's not my intention to cause trouble. I could have written about this a long time ago but I didn't, out of respect for Bong and Lani. Now that the cat's out of the bag, I feel it's time that Bong and Lani admitted it for their own peace of mind.

Pardon the cliché—the truth will really set you free. Only by coming to terms with one's dark past can he/she be assured that the future wouldn't be bleak.

Milking cow

Guess who this TV host/actress is? She thought she married a good man. Now she's finding out he's really good ... at taking her money. They now sleep in separate rooms. She's pissed that, after buying him a luxury car, he wants a newer model! Shouldn't that be immaterial to a material girl like her?

'Tahanang Pinoy'

"Tahanang Pinoy" (Sundays, 11 a.m., ABC 5) updates its tele-magazine format with everything about the Pinoy home—choosing an architect, securing financing, interior design ...

Scribbleworks Productions Inc. has gathered four dynamic hosts: irrepressible developer RJ Ledesma, savvy architect Gelo Manosa, the talented Chef Cristina and the beauteous model/interior designer Marilen Faustino.

Personal

Thanks from the bottom of my heart and vodka glass to my Watering Hole family—especially Loy and Tati Fortuna, Diether Ocampo, Polo Ravales, John Estrada, Janus del Prado, Katrina Halili, Say Alonzo, Direk Maryo J. de los Reyes, Yul Servo, Jo Ann Maglipon, Christine Dayrit, True Faith, especially Medwin, DJ Jon Tupaz and his wife Peachy, Alan Diones, Ana Pingol, Emerson Sy, Karen Panasoligan, Francis Simeon, Mario Dumaual, Lhar Santiago, Boss Vic del Rosario, Moises Fernandez, Robert Espinosa, Elmo Nilo, Roldan Castro, Favatini San, Mario Hernando, Ben de la Cruz, all my friends and family for making IC's 19th birthday bash truly unforgettable! Not only do I celebrate being a proud single mom, I also celebrate the joy of having you all in my life!

Special thanks to Dr. Vicki Belo, Aga and Charlene Muhlach, Cesar Montano and Sunshine Cruz, Ogie Alcasid, Ruffa Mae Quinto, Marvin Agustin and Pops Fernandez for making their presence felt at IC's party through phone calls. You are all embedded in my heart!

Most of all, my never-ending thanks to H for making me feel like a birthday girl every single day. I am a better mom now because I'm a happier woman.

E-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com

GRETCHEN Barretto

Playing god and fighting fate

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

'A PECULIARLY MESMERIZING TALE ABOUT seizing the day, "Stranger Than Fiction" creatively mulls over existential angst and disconnection.

Will Ferrell plays a stiff IRS officer, Harold Crick, who discovers that an all-knowing narrator in his head is talking about his organized, mundane existence. This female voice is very analytical and prescient, an unseen presence that forces Harold to reflect deeply on his joyless, obsessively controlled life.

A real person

Interestingly, a respected, eccentric author, Kay Eiffel (Emma Thompson), is experiencing writer's block. Simultaneous with the events of Harold's life, she goes through a trying period, unable to give her book its appropriate ending. She can't decide on the final fate of her lead character, an IRS officer named—you guessed it—Harold Crick.

It's revealed early on that she's the voice in the real person's head, mysteriously connected through unexplained means. Unaware that she's sending a real person to his doom, Kay struggles to write a fitting climax. She grudgingly yields to pressure from a new assistant, Penny (Queen Latifah), to beat the publisher's deadline.

"Stranger Than Fiction," by director Marc Foster ("Monster's Ball," "Finding Neverland") and screenwriter Zach Helm, is a sentimental and somewhat circuitous button-pusher, but it knows when to go for either the heartstrings or the gut. The strange, God-like involvement of the author with the life of an actual person isn't elaborated on, as it concerns itself only with the point that it's happening and must be dealt with soon.

WILL Ferrell in "Stranger than Fiction"

That immediacy is evident, although there are times when Harold's conscious soul-searching becomes rather torpid. But the restructuring of the guy's square ways takes time, so major clues that inspire his big quest to find the enigmatic narrator are dropped and picked up much later.

Before Harold's inevitable meeting with the person in charge of his fate, he enlists the aid of a curious Literature professor, Jules, played charismatically by Dustin Hoffman. Harold also becomes attracted to someone he's auditing, a feisty baker, Ana (Maggie Gyllenhaal).

Toned down

Ferrell as the troubled taxman is a little different from previous portrayals—he's more toned down, and the slightly subdued character is someone you might take more seriously. He's still the worrisome lug, but quieter—a guy who ordinarily sees numbers, schematics and measurements in everyday life. These are illustrated by detailed animated graphics.

"Stranger Than Fiction" could've been smoother and more snappy, but it's coherently told and resourcefully presented. Thompson's expositions as the seemingly inspired writer, and her scenarios as the author who lost her muse, offer an interesting parallel to Harold's troubles. An accomplished author is having serious difficulty in coming up with the satisfying ending, while the "fictional" character who always thought that he's in control of his world, has to come to terms with the loss of his freedom and his direction. When their lives expectedly intersect, it's when important questions about artistic compromises and meaningful lives are pondered.

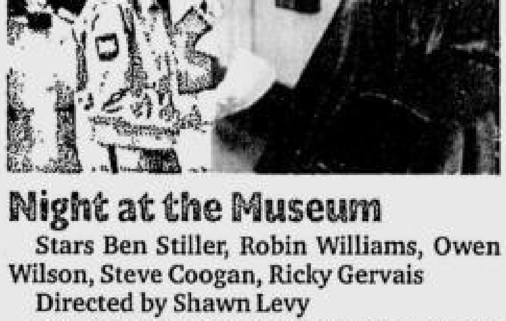
It's not as deep and weighty as expected, but it's still a welcome, clever film that answers its questions satisfactorily—and amusingly.

OPENING TODAY

Babel

Stars Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett, Gael Garcia Bernal, Adriana Barraza, Rinko Kikuchi
Directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu

The third part of director Iñárritu and writer Guillermo Arriaga's trilogy (that started with "Amores Perros" and "21 Grams") follows "multiple intercut story strands ... [that] spread across three continents and, per the Biblical title, numerous languages." Todd McCarthy of Variety comments: "Effectively building dread and emotional tension ... this film employs a deterministically grim mindset." Ray Bennett of The Hollywood Reporter describes it as "tense, relentless and difficult to watch ... an emotionally shattering drama ... [on] the perils of being unable to communicate." David Ansen of Newsweek cautions that the filmmakers' "fatalism is beginning to look as arbitrary and precooked as any Hollywood formula movie."



Night at the Museum

Stars Ben Stiller, Robin Williams, Owen Wilson, Steve Coogan, Ricky Gervais
Directed by Shawn Levy

Based on Milan Trenc's children's book, this urban fantasy features as hero, a bumbling night watchman (Stiller) who is stunned to discover that the dioramas and exhibits at New York's Museum of Natural History come to life after hours. Ty Burr of Boston Globe asserts that the flick is "stuffed with smart performers doing graciously silly work ... all the director has to do is manage traffic." Ann Hornaday of Washington Post professes that the film is "competently ... directed. It's a fun ride, and the big payoff ... is even more gratifying." Kevin Crust of Los Angeles Times complains that it's "a tedious family comedy ... [that has] a ton of special effects but never engages."

Little Children

Stars Kate Winslet, Jennifer Connelly, Patrick Wilson, Jackie Earle Haley
Directed by Todd Field

Based on Tom Perrotta's acclaimed novel, director Field's follow-up to "In the Bedroom" explores the dark side of suburbia, as a desperate housewife (Winslet) gets entangled in an illicit affair with a neighbor's house husband (Wilson). Peter Travers of Rolling Stone raves that it's an "unnervingly funny and quietly devastating film ... [that] performs a high-wire act that balances hard truth and hard-won tenderness." Richard Schickel of Time magazine observes that, compared to "Bedroom," this film is "more ambitious ... a considerable achievement, particularly in the way it permits authentic savagery to break through the leafy languidness of suburban life." Ella Taylor of Village Voice thinks that the movie "feels divided against itself, driven by opposed impulses of tragedy and dark humor."

Stranger Than Fiction

Stars Will Ferrell, Emma Thompson, Dustin Hoffman, Maggie Gyllenhaal
Directed by Marc Foster

While brushing his teeth, a taxman (Ferrell) hears the disembodied voice of a female narrator (Thompson) relating his life story. He later realizes that he is the hapless hero in a novel being written by the reclusive narrator/author. Roger Ebert of Chicago Sun-Times praises it "as thoughtful ... thought-stirring... a meditation on life, art and romance ... an uncommonly intelligent film." Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly opines that it's "an eminently easy-to-watch piece of one-joke pop japery ... [that] mimics 'The Truman Show' and 'Adaptation.'" Guardian's Peter Bradshaw points out that the script "has some quirky points, but it's very sugary and sentimental, feeble compared to Woody Allen or Charlie Kaufman." Exclusively at Ayala Cinemas.

Blood and Chocolate

Stars Agnes Bruckner, Hugh Dancy, Olivier Martinez, Bryan Dick
Directed by Katja von Garnier

An ingénue (Bruckner) hides a dark secret from her artist-beau (Dancy): She's a werewolf. As expected, the forbidden romance threatens to expose her clan. Produced by the same company behind "Underworld" (Lakeshore), this Gothic love story is based on a supernatural novel by Annette Curtis Klause. The lead star explains that the "weird" title refers to her character's dual nature "as werewolf and woman." Gabe Leibowitz of eCinemaCenter.com states that this flick "is an unmitigated triumph; it's successfully carved out a cozy niche in the hallowed halls of ineptitude." Joshua Tyler of CinemaBlend.com concurs: "It sounds a little like the sappy, retarded brother of 'Underworld.'"

ROUNDUP

Early Oscar favorites

LOS ANGELES—The offbeat comedy "Little Miss Sunshine" gained an edge by winning the Producers Guild Best Feature Film prize as Hollywood sat ahead of Oscars nominations to be unveiled Tuesday (last night in Manila).

Most of LA will be asleep when the nominees are revealed at a 5:30 a.m. ceremony, triggering four frenzied weeks of studio campaigning ahead of Tinseltown's big night on Feb. 25.

"There are definite favorites for most of the marquee awards but ultimately I think you'll see the gold shared across several films," said Tom O'Neil, a columnist with the Los Angeles Times' theenvelope.com In the Best Picture race, Golden Globes winner "Babel," Martin Scorsese's gangster drama "The Departed" and the musical "Dreamgirls" head the field with "The Queen" and "Little Miss Sunshine" also tipped as contenders.

However, Clint Eastwood's groundbreaking war drama "Letters from Iwo Jima," shot entirely in Japanese, could squeeze out "Little Miss Sunshine" for a Best Picture nomination. *AFP*

Edwin O'Hara's final bow

TV DIRECTOR Edwin O'Hara passed away in the United States on Jan. 18 due to complications arising from a heart ailment, according to his brother, filmmaker Mario O'Hara. Edwin was 58.

He directed the TV shows "Coney Reyes on Camera," "Sarge," "Maricel Drama Special" and "Flames" and appeared in Mario's movies "Ang Babae sa Bubungang Lata" and "Manananggal in Manila."

"He didn't direct movies because he wanted to leave that to me," Mario told INQUIRER Entertainment. "He flew to Los Angeles last December for his treatment."

According to his mother Bessie, he died due to liver failure. "His heart medication destroyed his liver."

He is survived by wife Linda and children Joven, Jason, Tata, Karen and Brian.

Meanwhile, Raymond Pagdanganan, who died Sunday of internal hemorrhage after figuring in a car accident, was a former member of Orange and Lemons.

The son of Bulacan ex-governor Obet Pagdanganan was rhythm guitarist of the band during his high school and college days.

The night before the accident, he attended a gig of his ex-band mates in Malolos, where he and Orange and Lemons' Mccoy and Clem made plans for his forthcoming birthday.

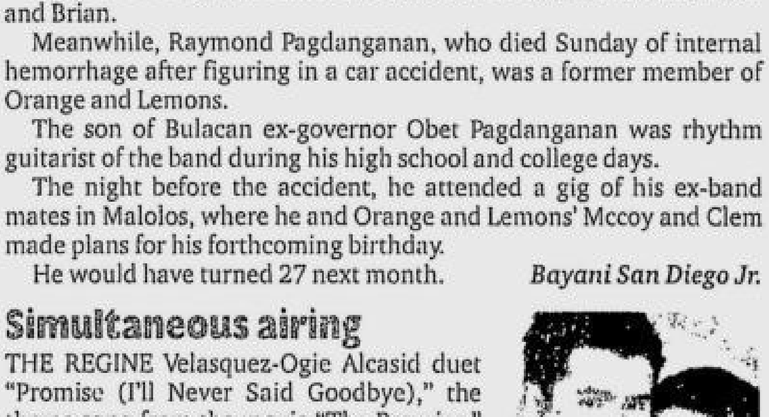
He would have turned 27 next month. *Bayani San Diego Jr.*

Simultaneous airing

THE REGINE Velasquez-Ogie Alcasid duet "Promise (I'll Never Said Goodbye)," the theme song from the movie "The Promise," will be simultaneously aired on leading radio stations tonight at 6.

The duet, a cut from the forthcoming "The Promise" original soundtrack album to be released by Universal Records, will play on 90.7 Love Radio, Energy FM 91.5, I-FM 93.9, Home Radio 97.9, YES FM 101.1, ABS-CBN's WRR 101.9 For Life and Star FM 102.7.

OGIE Alcasid and Regine Velasquez



FOLLIES DE MWAH

Last call for 'Bedazzled 6'

"BEDAZZLED 6" IS CLUB Mwah's longest-running show. It opened in June last year and winds up this weekend.

The show includes production numbers culled from musicals of Oriental origin—the Sakura flower festival of Korea, the Thai version of Madonna's "Vogue," and the spoof of Cameron Mackintosh's "Miss Saigon," complete with a descending helicopter.

The most requested hit segment is "Cell Block Tango," a spin-off from "Chicago."

Club Mwah is at The Venue Tower, 652 Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City. Call 535-7943.

Nyoy and Nina

Nyoy Volante and Nina are the featured singers in the month-long opening celebration of Club O Resto-Bar (formerly Dish) at ABS CBN complex, Mother Ignacia Street, Quezon City.

Nyoy celebrates his birthday with a show tonight at 9 to be opened by the Freeverse band. Nina goes onstage Jan. 31, 9 p.m. Call 911-5555.

Tonight

The Spirit of '67 at **The Bellevue Hotel** in Alabang; 9 p.m.

Jojo A with **Midnight Connection** at **RJTV Bar**, Jupiter Street, Makati

January 25

"**Dell Rocks**" at the **Eastwood Central Plaza** with **Up Dharma Down**

January 26

RJ 'n Friends with **Moonstrucks** at **RJTV Bar**, Jupiter Street, Makati

"**Dell Rocks**" at the **Eastwood Central Plaza** with **Orange and Lemons**